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The Articulation of Hegemonic Power through Television:

Islamic Republic's Discourses Regarding Iranian Everyday Life

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
2016

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ABSTRACT

The Islamic Republic of Iran's discourse has been articulated differently throughout various periods of its history. After the presidential election of 2009, this discourse was confronted by a crisis brought its hegemony into question. The claim of electoral fraud by the predominantly middle class residents of Tehran produced the "Green Movement"—with unprecedented protests and subsequent repression. Despite the repression, the Islamic Republic's discourse also needed to form a kind of subjectivity among the middle class in order to remain hegemonic. The middle class in Tehran has always played a significant role in major social and political changes in contemporary Iranian history. Therefore, forming the subjectivity of the middle class secures the Islamic Republic's discourse from losing its hegemony. Since 1979, Iranian state television has always represented the preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the Islamic Republic's discourse. Therefore, studying the representations of this apparatus reveals the articulation of the Islamic Republic's discourse regarding different aspects of everyday life. Using the method of discourse analysis offered by Laclau and Mouffe, this research sets out to explore if the Islamic Republic's discourse is the hegemonic discourse in forming the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class after confronting a dislocation in 2009. The preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of this discourse were explored by studying three of the most popular television series in the four years following the events of 2009. The hegemonic appropriation of these meanings has been examined through conducting interviews with middle class residents of Tehran. Brining these two elements together, the research demonstrates that the Islamic Republic's discourse has constructed a depoliticised subjectivity among this class that not only prevents the discourse from being dis-articulated, but also can advance its desired articulation within various realms of the middle class's everyday life.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION¹

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Iranian revolution of 1979 caused the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty. On 1 April 1979, a referendum of 98% of Iranians resulted in the formation of an Islamic Republic as the political system for the country. This political system was one based on ideological Islamic values, specifically, on a Shiite reading based on Ayatollah Khomeini's interpretations of Islam. Ayatollah Khomeini, who is known as the leader of Iran's Islamic revolution, was seeking to build a system led by Shiite clergy and the protection of Islamic Jurists (*velayat-e faghih*)². As the head of state, the Supreme Leader (*Vali-ye faghih*)³ determines the main policies of the regime in the establishment of an ideal Islamic Republic. The changes of the 1979 revolution resulted in the new Iranian administration seeking the promotion of its desired ideas for different aspects of society and making changes among the previous regime's social order, according to ideas that were first, against the previous regime's ideas of governance, and second, in accord with Khomeini's theory of Islamic government.

For instance, in the realm of politics, the emergence of the Islamic Republic and the approval of constitutional law according to this political system caused Islamists, and especially the clergy, to become significant and decisive in ruling the country. As a consequence, secular political groups and non-religious individuals, including leftists and liberals, were eliminated from the political administration of the country. In the realm of the economy, new forms of economic policies emerged during the early years of the revolution, which were based on criticising consumerism and dependency on the West. These policies led to the imposition of sanctions from the West during the war between Iraq and Iran (September 1980 to August 1988) and the early years of the revolution, and this led to a homogenous type of consumption in Iranian society. Since the diversity in commodities was reduced due to the cessation of imports from

¹ In the whole of this research, I refer to the term "Islamic Republic's discourse" as "IRdisc".

² Ayatollah Khomeini developed this concept in his book "Islamic Government" (*Hokumat-e Eslami*), which was first published in 1970. Referring to this concept, Khomeini, in his book, argues that the country should be run according to Shiite Islamic laws, and a Shiite clergy (*faghih*) should supervise all aspects of government for this to happen.

³ Ayatollah Khomeini himself was the first Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, and after he died in June, 1989, Ayatollah Khamenei became the Supreme Leader and has ruled until today.

Western countries, both in terms of commodities and of essential products for factories, people had to consume the same commodities, which were mostly the products of internal workshops, without having many or various options (Karsh, 2002, p57). In the realm of culture also the importance of Islamic values (based on the Islamic Republic's readings of these values) led to the kind of cultural policies that, for instance, led to compulsory Islamic dress codes and headscarves (*hijab*) for women and the Islamisation of universities.

According to the changes that the Islamic Republic of Iran was pursuing in the different realms of social life, a new lifestyle emerged for citizens that were based on the ideas of the Islamic Republic. This new lifestyle was sometimes promoted by using government force, but the ideal of the Islamic Republic was to cause satisfaction among the citizens in order to accept the Islamic lifestyle that was based on the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The desired and preferred meanings of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding different aspects of social life that were constructing the lifestyle and everyday life of citizens, must therefore be accepted by citizens and must become the preferred meanings in their identities. This means that, on the basis of the benchmark values of the Islamic Republic, which were promoted by Islamist revolutionaries and were formed according to the Ayatollah Khomeini's interpellations of political Islam in order to build an Islamic state, a discourse was formed that has sought to prefer its desired meanings in relation to the everyday life of Iranians. Since it is impossible to reach this discourse and to grasp it as a coherent entity, which has been formed and presented by the state in order to transform everyday life (because, as I will discuss in the theoretical chapter, discourses are not matters that are recognisable out of contexts), then, in order to grasp this discourse and its preferred meanings, everyday life should be considered as the realm of the emergence of discursively-preferred meanings. Meanings that construct everyday life and articulate the discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran are recognisable in the efforts of this discourse to have a preference for them in everyday life and its different aspects.

This discourse, by using apparatuses like the mass media and the educational system, which were seized after the revolution, has sought to institute a preference for its desired meanings among citizens. Understanding the achievements of this discourse in creating preference for its desired meanings seems impossible, unless by examining

the lifestyle and scrutinising the everyday life of the citizens that this discourse is attempting to persuade. Hence, in order to grasp this discourse and the meanings that have formed it, on the one hand, and, on the other, to understand the success of this discourse in relation to its preferred meanings among citizens, it seems necessary, first, to study the apparatuses that this discourse is using to spread its preferred and desired meanings, and, second, to study the achievements of this discourse in achieving the preferred discursive meanings in the realm of everyday life and among the citizens of the Islamic Republic.

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

One of the most important apparatuses that discourses benefit from in order to develop satisfaction among citizens through accepting their preferred meanings is the media. Media, on the basis of their nature, are mostly consumed in leisure time. The media have made it possible to cause effects on audiences through representation strategies that result in the acceptance of discursively preferred meanings that are behind media productions for the audience, although audiences have the possibility to be active and effective in reading media texts. Television is known to be the most important and most consumed media worldwide and this is also the case in Iran. According to the results of a census, 98.4% of Iranians have a TV set at home, while 57% have radio, 45.9% have a PC or laptop, and only 37.8% have access to the Internet (Statistical Centre of Iran, Census of 2013). According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Article 175), the production of television and radio content in Iran is the exclusive right of the state. This right was given to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) organisation, which is a state organisation under the direct supervision of the supreme leader. According to Iran's constitution, IRIB programming (or as it is called in the official literature of the IRdisc: The National Media: *Resane-ye Melli*) is the only legal television use in Iran. Although this monopoly has shifted due to widespread illegal use of satellite TV, still the only legal form of TV consumption in Iran is through consuming IRIB productions and programs (the evolution of Iranian state television will be discussed in the chapter three). On the basis of this exclusivity, media apparatuses are among the most effective tools for the state to promote its desired discursive meanings among its citizens. The study of the media apparatuses of the

Islamic Republic brings us the possibility to understand and determine the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. According to the nature of television and its close connection to everyday life, studying state television also makes it possible to achieve the meanings that this discourse is trying to prefer in relation to different aspects of everyday life.

The formation and transformation of the IRdisc has been the subject of study in much research. The social and economic context of the Revolution (Abrahamian 1982, Keddie 2003, Kurzman 2005, Tavakoli-Targhi 2001), the effect of the discourse promoted by the state in cultural changes (Sreberny and Torfeh 2013, Varzi 2006, Gheissari 2009, Dabashi 2007) and the social and economic transformations of Iranian society under the IRdisc (Behdad & Nomani 2006, Bayat 1997, Adelkhah 1999) have all been studied and discussed by various thinkers. Many scholars have studied the operation of the Islamic Republic in different eras and periods. The important point here is that, in considering the nature of discourses, discursively preferred meanings are being articulated differently in different eras as a consequence of contextual objectivity (as I will discuss in the theoretical chapter, discourses are historic matters that are related to the objectivity of the context). In the case of the IRdisc, different articulations are also determinable in different periods according to the contextual circumstances. Namely, this discourse, in different periods since the 1979 revolution, has sought to prefer different meanings in relation to the everyday life of citizens. Consequently, the utilisation of this discourse by the media apparatuses has been transformed in different eras. By emphasising the exclusivity of TV productions in Iran, the study of these productions in the different periods since the revolution will demonstrate the desired articulation of the IRdisc in relation to its preferred meanings in each period. For instance, the study of state television productions during the Iran-Iraq war demonstrates the preferred meanings that the IRdisc articulated regarding that period⁴. The study of state television productions in the years after the war shows the preferred meanings of this discourse in relation to aspects of everyday life during

⁴ Varzi, in her book *“Warring Souls”* (2006), did an outstanding job of analysing a TV program called *“Revayat-e Fath”* (Chronicles of Victory) which was broadcast by state television during wartime. She considered the preferred meanings of the concepts “War” and “Victory” in the Islamic Republic’s discourse in the mentioned TV program, and the effects of these meanings on the construction of Iranian everyday life, both during and after the war.

the reconstruction era after the war. Although, according to the discursive redlines of the IRdisc, during all periods and eras following the revolution, the same policy is recognisable in broadcasting, but the emphasis of this discourse in each periods, according to the contextual circumstances, was definitely on the preference for different meanings in regard to different aspects of Iranian everyday life (this will be discussed in the chapter three of the dissertation in some detail). As will be discussed in the theoretical chapter, preferring certain discursive meanings among people, means making them satisfied about acting according to the meanings that are the desired meanings of the discourse studied. These meanings and the acts of individuals in relation to them (either through acceptance or ignorance) form everyday life. Whenever a discourse is successful in gaining preference for its desired meanings, consequently that discourse becomes more powerful and hegemonic in forming everyday life. The main question of the current study is forming here: to what extent is the IRdisc the hegemonic discourse in forming the everyday life and identity of the citizens of Iran according to the preferred meanings that have been represented in the productions of state television? Nonetheless, this question still seems a raw and vague question, since, according to what has been discussed before, this discourse in different periods, has sought to prefer different meanings according to the contextual circumstances. It therefore seems crucial to argue in which era (and why this era is significant), and according to what meanings (and why these meanings are significant) were represented on state television, and among which group of Iranian citizens (and why this group is significant) I am looking for the answer to this question: Can the IRdisc be considered the hegemonic discourse in Iran?

Background to the Research

Television and, as mentioned by Althusser (1971), “ideological state apparatuses” in general, are playing a significant role in forming the meanings in people’s everyday life. Various research has been carried out by a number of scholars about the close connection of the meanings that construct everyday life and TV texts (Williams 1975, Morley 1986, 1992, 2000, Silverstone 1994, Fisk 1987, 1990, Hall, Hobson, Lowe & Wills, 1980). Discourses that are behind television productions through the application of different strategies of representation in media texts are seeking to achieve certain

aims, such as the fixing of discursively preferred meanings in the identities of audiences, the naturalisation of these meanings, and the concealment of the fact that these meanings and identities that discourses are attempting to form are constructed. Discourses behind TV productions (like other discourses) are the articulations of different elements and meanings that have been formed around a specific nodal point. TV productions, according to the usage of different representational strategies, are attempting to represent discursively preferred meanings as the common sense and inherent and natural meanings of signs. Among various forms of TV productions, TV series, both in the number of their audiences and also their closeness to everyday life, are significant in promoting meanings that relate to different aspects of everyday life. Much research has been carried out to study Iranian media by considering different fields of media production. Although the number of research projects on Iranian television are fewer than those on other subjects, like Iranian cyberspace or Iranian cinema, but there are a few outstanding research publications in this field. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994) have discussed the rise of television in Iran and the effects that this rise has caused for the Iranian revolution of 1979 and they have also discussed the early policies of the Islamic Republic in regard to the regulation of state television. Khiyabani (2010) has also studied the politics of broadcasting in Iran by considering the policies of TV broadcasting in Iran in three periods. In addition, a number of unpublished PhD theses have considered Iranian television policies in different areas. For instance, Guivian (2006), in his thesis about religion, television and culture in post-revolutionary Iran, has studied the representation of religious-revolutionary ideas on IRIB and has considered the emergence of Islamic television after the 1979. Emami (1981), by presenting a historical narration of emergence and the evolution of the mass media in Iran, has studied the development of television as the most important form of mass media in Iran. There has been little research on audiences and how they process state TV discourses, such as that which was undertaken by Ghaem (1996) on the audience's use of video in the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the research of Abutaleb Juola (2007) about Iranian audiences' perception of two satellite Persian language channels. This research, especially in the chapter on the subject of the study, has taken many of the benefits of this previous research in order to reach a historical narration of TV discourse's evolution in Iran under the influence of

the state. Although the mentioned research is significant in studying Iranian television, and they are helpful in understanding state policies that relate to the production of TV texts, it can be said that the current study is significant and unique in the field of Iranian television study in two ways: First, in this research, the connection between state TV products and the preferred meanings of the IRdisc has been studied in order to elaborate the close connection between these products and the preferred meanings that the discourse of the Islamic Republic has desired to promote in different periods. By referring to TV products, I have tried to reach the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and, as I will discuss in the continuation of this section, the emphasis of this research is on popular TV series that have been broadcast by the state TV in a specific period. None of the mentioned research projects have studied Iranian TV products in this detail in order to grasp the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. Second, in this research the relation between the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and the subjectification of the Tehranian middle class (as I will discuss during the third chapter in this study) as a group that potentially has more possibilities to deconstruct these meanings, has been discussed. These attempts make this research unique.

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

The subject of the current study is the analysis of the confrontation between two kinds of formations. First, the formation of the IRdisc in a specific era relating to specific aspects of everyday life, and, second, the subjectivity formation of the Tehranian middle class, which is potentially more able to deconstruct the preferred meanings of the IRdisc in relation to those aspects.

A grasp of the first formation and the determination of which signifiers the IRdisc is trying to favour in its desired meanings, and what these preferred meanings are, became possible through studying popular TV series during the selected period of this research. Furthermore, understanding the second formation in relation to the favoured meanings of the IRdisc, which are represented in TV series, became possible by referring to the members of the middle class that the IRdisc has tried to encourage to take on its desired meanings. Conducting interviews with individuals who belong to that class, and to explore their preferred meanings, made the position of the interviewees clear in regard to the signifiers that the preferred meanings of the IRdisc

have represented in the TV series.

The considered period in this research is between 2009 and 2013. Namely, this is the period in which the IRdisc experienced its most major crisis since the revolution. This was due to the country's highest number of protests in the aftermath of Iran's 2009 presidential election. These protests, which are called the "Green Movement" (*Jonbesh-e Sabz*) by the protesters, has occurred more among the middle class, especially in the Tehranian middle class. So, on 15 June 2009, as the Mayor of Tehran said, almost 3 million citizens of Tehran (the capital) participated in an unprecedented demonstration in protest against the authorities (*Etemad-e Melli* Newspaper, 18 June 2009). The Green Movement that emerged from the claims of fraud by the authorities in publicising the results of the presidential election of 2009, according to lots of scholars like Fadaee (2012, p70), Rieffer-Flanagan (2013, p222), Sadeghi, in Nabavi (ed.) (2012, p129), Khosrokhavar in Jahanbegloo (2012, p50), was a middle class movement. For instance, Sadeghi, in Nabavi (2012), sees the Green Movement as being a middle class phenomenon, especially in regard to its organisation and social networks. She believes that the participation of the lower classes in this movement was restricted to the less costly actions, like casting votes, rather than in taking part in mass demonstrations. Rieffer-Flanagan (2013) believes that the inability of the Green Movement, as a middle class movement with the demands for democracy and freedom to mobilise the lower class, is one of the reasons that this movement was not successful in causing political changes and reforms. The Green Movement began in Tehran and was centred there and did not expand much to other cities, except for a few street protests in big cities like Isfahan and Shiraz, which have a high number of middle class residents.

Research Question

Now it seems possible to complete the main question of the current research: the IRdisc was facing its major legitimacy crisis in the almost 30 years since the 1979 revolution, which was formed, and occurred, mostly through the mediation of the Tehranian middle class after the 2009 presidential election. During the four years after the election (meanwhile, this discourse was experiencing the crisis and the state was facing protests in streets of Tehran), the IRdisc, despite using its repressive forces, has

tried to articulate its preferred meanings that relate to some aspect of the middle class's everyday life. Considering that Iranian state television has always represented the preferred meanings of the IRdisc in different contextual circumstances (this claim will be elaborated in a later chapter), the main question of this research will be: what discursive preferred meanings in regard to which signifiers (aspects of the everyday life) have been represented in the most popular TV series between the summer of 2009 and the winter of 2013? Are these meanings significant and effective in constructing the desired form of identity (or, as will be discussed: the subjectivity) in the IRdisc among the middle class in order to remain the hegemonic discourse after experiencing its legitimacy crisis?

The Necessity and Significance of the Research

Finding answers to the above question is important and also necessary from two aspects: First, it is obvious that the Islamic Republic, during protests and demonstrations, which started from June 2009, has used its repressive forces in order to suppress the protests. Nonetheless, for how long can the state use its repressive forces? As I will discuss in the theoretical chapter, as Gramsci has argued, the hegemony of a discourse means its superiority in making people act and think according to constructed and articulated discursively preferred meanings. The hegemony of a discourse is a combination of elements of satisfaction and repression. Both of these elements can be obtained by the mediation of state apparatuses that are related to them. The Islamic Republic, by its mediation of repressive state apparatuses like the police, the courts, the anti-riot forces and the military forces, has repressed the protests. Nevertheless, this discourse needed to develop the satisfaction among the middle class in order that they will act according to its preferred meanings in order that it will remain as the hegemonic discourse in the construction of the subjectivity of this class. By considering Althusser's (1971) definition of ideological state apparatuses, Iranian state television can be considered to be one of the ideological state apparatuses of the Islamic Republic to develop satisfaction among citizens, causing them to act according to its preferred discursive meanings. Studying the representations of Iranian state TV during the years after the emergence of the Green Movement therefore brings us the possibility to firstly determine the more significant

signifiers in the IRdisc, which were the subject of representation during the legitimacy crisis, and, secondly, it leads to an understanding of the discursively preferred meanings of the IRdisc in relation to those signifiers. The common thought among people when they remember the Green Movement, is that the Islamic Republic, just by applying its repressive forces could suppress the protests and had therefore passed through that crisis. Nonetheless, this research is an attempt to argue that although the state used its repressive forces during the protests, this discourse was also seeking to encourage satisfaction among citizens through the IRdisc (or, as I will discuss in the theoretical chapter, it was seeking to form the subjectivity of citizens and to make them the subjects of its power) by articulating and representing its preferred meanings in relation to aspects of the everyday life of this urban middle class through the TV series shown on state television. Understanding these discursive meanings and determining the signifiers that these meanings have formed in regard to them, leads to an understanding of the articulation of the IRdisc. This understanding, if it is obtained, is significant and important, since it demonstrates the problematic of this discourse and it reveals the characteristics of the desired form of the subjectivity that this discourse is seeking to form. The recognition of these characteristics through the attempts of this discourse, in order to highlight them, is important, not only for understanding how the IRdisc has survived the legitimacy crisis, but also it helps us to comprehend the general attitude of this discourse in being, or remaining, the hegemonic discourse in constructing the subjectivity of the middle class. Since the first step to each beneficial criticism is also the understanding of the subject of the critique, the mentioned understanding can bring us the possibility of an advantageous and fundamental critique of the IRdisc according to its problematic and the characteristics of its desired form of subjectivity.

Second, a comparative study between the articulation of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and the subjectivity formation of the Tehranian middle class, by examining the hegemonic level of this discourse among this class, it brings us the possibility to understand what meanings are forming the everyday life of this urban middle class. In a chapter in this study and in a sub-chapter on the Tehranian middle class, I will argue why the subjectivity of Tehranian middle class is significant for the Islamic Republic, and why forming this subjectivity according to the desired characteristics of this

discourse could secure the IRdisc from being deconstructed. Many Iranian analysts who have studied the lifestyle of the urban middle class in Tehran believe that this lifestyle could be considered as a kind of resistance against the state and the ruling class, since it is inconsistent with the ideological values of the IRdisc in constructing the religious lifestyle (Kazemi 2009, Moghadam 2003, Moghissi 1999, Sreberny 2013, Varzi 2006, Mahdavi 2008 & 2007, Sadeghi in Nabavi (ed.) 2012). Although this claim seems to be true when studying some aspects of the Iranian middle class's everyday life, which has mostly been formed in contradiction with the ideological values of the state, such as their appearance in public (the *hijab* and fashion), or in their cultural consumption, but the question about the possibility of deconstructing the preferred meanings of the IRdisc by this middle class, throughout its everyday life and lifestyle, still remains. It means that just giving consideration to the objective lifestyle of this middle class, results in this lifestyle, and everyday life, being in contradiction with the ideological values of the IRdisc, is an incomplete consideration of everyday life. We need to seek answers to the question of the possibilities of this everyday life deconstructing the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. Finding answer to this question is impossible, unless through studying the meanings that construct the everyday life of this urban middle class. Analysing the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class and examining it according to the meanings that the IRdisc is trying to favour in regard to different aspects of this everyday life, leads to an understanding of the extent to which these middle class members can be considered to be the subjects of the IRdisc.

This analysis also leads to an exploration of whether the middle class's everyday life is a construction of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc in regard to meanings, which can sometimes be formed through indirect relation with its ideological values. Although the authority of the Islamic Republican state has always emphasised its ideological values, has the subjectification process of this discourse always been carried out according to its ideological values? Or is this discourse, with its articulation of meanings that do not seem to be ideological in the first place, trying to form a subjectivity that contains characteristics, which stops this discourse from being deconstructed? Surely the formation of this subjectivity brings benefits for the IRdisc, rather than just surviving the legitimacy crisis. These benefits may be grasped in relation to the political economy of the IRdisc, which has been formed based on the

lifestyle of this class that, if it is not Islamic, is also not a threat to the hegemony of the IRdisc since, as I will argue based on the findings of this research, these characteristics make the politics and the ideology move beyond the concerns of the Tehranian middle class and thus they smooth out the articulation of the IRdisc according to its desired meanings, which are related to the signifiers of politics and ideology. This research is therefore an attempt to grasp characteristics that construct the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class and to examine whether these characteristics, that form the subjectivity of this class, have been formed in relation to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc, or not? The findings of this research, in addition to exploring the desired form of the subjectivity of the IRdisc, reveals the extent of the hegemony of this discourse in forming the everyday life and the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class.

During the first section of the next chapter, which constitutes the theoretical framework of this research, I will discuss why studying everyday life, as the realm of the manifestation of meanings that construct the subjectivity of the actors in this realm (people) is significant, and may be beneficial in bringing the extraordinary out of the ordinary of everyday life, and transforming the power relations within this realm. Before addressing what the theoretical principles of this study are in the next chapter, the ensuing part briefly shows what is discussed in the chapters of this research dissertation.

MAP OF THE RESEARCH

The next chapter of this research demonstrates what the theoretical approach of this research is in studying the meanings that construct everyday life. In this section, I will start from the notion of everyday life and I will argue why the consideration of everyday life is both significant and beneficial. The approach of this research in considering the significance of everyday life for the study has mostly been formed under the influence of Lefebvre's works. Then Foucault's thoughts about the notion of power will be discussed in order to reach a proper understanding of power relations within everyday life, rather than what Lefebvre has suggested. Consequently, the importance of the concept of discourse, as the matter that constructs the power relation within everyday life, will be deliberated upon. The approach of this research, in considering the notion of discourse and applying the discourse analysis method, has

been formed under the influence of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The concept of hegemony by Gramsci, as a key concept in forming Laclau and Mouffe's theories on discourse analysis, will therefore be discussed as well. In this chapter, I will also discuss the role of the media as an ideological state apparatus, as Althusser has suggested, in constructing meanings by discourses.

In Chapter Three: Evolution of the Iranian State Television Discourse in Post-Revolutionary Iran, I am going to argue that why and how the state television in Iran totally supports the ideas of the IRdisc through presenting a historical analysis of the evolution of the discourse of Iranian television, emphasising this evolution after the 1979 revolution.

In Chapter Four: Thinking about Middle Class in Oil-Rent Iran, the significance of the Tehranian middle class's forms of subjectivities for the IRdisc will be discussed after determining what I mean by the Tehranian middle class and discussing how this class has been formed and transformed during contemporary Iranian history.

Chapter Five will discuss the methodological principles of the research in considering the representation of the preferred meanings and the desired subject positions of the discourses that are demonstrated in television. In addition, the method of gathering and analysing data that has been applied is justified in this chapter.

In Chapter Six: The Body of the Research, Findings 1: Analysis of the TV Series, after presenting a synopsis of each TV series, argues which are the preferred meanings of the IRdisc, represented in the three most popular TV series from 2009 to 2013 and relates them to the aspects of the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class and which of these meanings have been preferred by them. Consequently, in Chapter Seven: The Body of the Research, Findings 2: An Analysis of Middle class Attitudes, through analysing data gathered from conducted interviews, I will examine the hegemonic level of the Islamic Republic's discursively preferred meanings in constructing the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class.

Finally, in Chapter Eight: Conclusion, I will share my responses to the main questions of this research and I will discuss how the characteristics of the constructed subjectivity influence the Tehranian middle class's everyday life in favour of the IRdisc in order that it will remain the hegemonic discourse.

CHAPTER TWO: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

EVERYDAY LIFE

The rapid expansion of cultural studies in the last several decades, which has targeted the construction of meanings in societies as the main subject of consideration, has elevated “everyday life” as the realm of the manifestation of the constructed cultural meanings. Nonetheless, it seems necessary to argue what I mean by everyday life, and what the importance of this concept is that is considered to be the main realm that the meaning making processes are seeking to shape. When we are thinking about the concept of everyday life, and when we want to determine it objectively, we can find that this everyday life exists since we are living it, but we cannot indicate what exactly everyday life is, since it is so familiar and obvious to us. Consequently, the question arises: if anything becomes familiar to us, does it mean that we understood it in the first place? We can acknowledge the importance of Hegel’s dictum: *“the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not well known”* (cited in Elden, 2004, p111).

Henri Lefebvre, the premier theorist of the everyday, asks whether, if we accept the fact that this current everyday life, under the domination and influence of profit seeking systems, has become banal and trivial, then is the study of the banal and ordinary inevitably trivial in itself?

Why should the study of the banal itself be banal? Are not the surreal, the extraordinary, the surprising, even the magical, also part of the real? Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary? (Lefebvre, 1987, p9)

The importance of studying everyday life becomes clear here. It may reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary. This means that Lefebvre sees potentials that are hidden in the heart of everyday life and, in his words, profit seeking systems are trying to keep these potential hidden, because the current situation of everyday life is beneficial for them in order that they can be powerful and dominant. The potentials of everyday life, if they are to be explored, could change the power relations and resist the existing form of power in societies.

Lefebvre (1987) argued that before the existence of the modern era, and before the emergence of the revolutions, which have formed the modern era and are known as the transformation point when we moved from the pre-modern to the modern era, the pattern of life has contained variety and significant difference at every level. This diversity and difference has never been completely and properly understood after the pre-modern era. Today, after the elapsed epoch of diversity, modern life is proceeding on its way to more similarity and uniformity. Different rationales, and even irrational doctrines, are demanding domination, not diversity (Lefebvre, 1987, p8).

Meanwhile, a collection of systems or subsystems has been created that are trying to provide a collection of durable objects in order to achieve their profits. For example, in architecture or cars or the food industry we can see that what these systems are inclined to do is to develop subsystems, which are independent and distinct from each other. Diversity exists, but it is so obvious that this diversity and its variations are organised and predetermined by a predominant force, which must be explored. These predominant forces can be any form of force, such as the capitalist system, or market conditions, or an ideology, or a composite of them that aims at everyday life as the sphere from which to gain profits. Whenever these predominant forces are explored and understood, it will be understood that these diversities are fake and pre-ordered (Lefebvre, 1971). All these systems consider the everyday as a collection of functions, which provide relationships between all those systems that may seem different and diverse. Everyday life is thus the product of those systems.

The everyday is therefore the most universal and the most unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden. A condition stipulated for the legibility of forms, ordained by means of functions, inscribed within structures, the everyday constitutes the platform upon which the bureaucratic society of controlled consumerism is erected. (Lefebvre, 1987, p9)

The first step in bringing out the potentials, which lie in everyday life, is to demonstrate the power relations in everyday life, which try to favour and expand their desired meanings. Consequently, it seems crucial to indicate that meanings, which have been represented as being immediate and natural, are constructed meanings, not inherent meanings. The construction of these meanings by power/s and favouring

them in relation to the different aspect of everyday life, inevitably will lead to the emergence of potential meanings, which have been marginalised, since particular meanings have been preferred in order to construct the realm of everyday life. In studying everyday life it therefore seems crucial to firstly understand what meanings construct everyday life and, secondly, in favour of what power/s, have these meanings been constructed?

Lefebvre, in studying everyday life and all the meanings, which create everyday life, recognises power relations as being the most important elements that form everyday life and also that make it a problematic notion. Lefebvre analyses these power relations in everyday life by systematic sight. He believes that the produced and reproduced structures of the capitalist system have totally seized everyday life. These structures are dominant and, at the end of the day, they benefit the capitalist system by this domination (Lefebvre, 1971).

Facing the realm of everyday life as the product of the systems that Lefebvre has mentioned (or, as I will discuss, as a product of forms of subjectivity that the discourses are trying to expand), we can choose two totally different strategies. Heidegger, the German philosopher, supports one of these strategies. He discussed this notion of the everyday as being a trivial fact that has no value to consider. He believed that the problem of the everyday must be solved from the transcendental point of view. We are not supposed to engage with the everyday in order to solve the problems of the everyday (Roberts, 2006, p17). Although what Heidegger referred to as the everyday could definitely be differently defined from the way in which Lefebvre sees this notion, but Lefebvre criticizes Heidegger's notion of the everyday, and he believed that he undervalued it. For Lefebvre, everyday life has a contradiction within it, as it embraces both the trivial and the extraordinary. Lefebvre is critical of Heidegger's attribution of permissivity, triviality and anonymity to this notion, and thinks that Heidegger's notion of everyday life is underestimated (Elden, 2006, p66 & 76). Lefebvre brings up everyday life as a site of struggle. He believes that the Marxian concept of alienation is now flowing into everyday life, and the actors in this realm are alienated (Lefebvre, 1971). This means that everyday life is problematic.

The realm of everyday life is the realm of the production and reproduction of powers according to their values and interests, but critical analysis of current everyday life

would provide possibilities to explore how power has been articulated in this realm and which meanings construct the current condition of everyday life. Lefebvre (1971) believes the everyday and everyday life, in its current form, it seems to be the sole reasonable source, with the grasp of its mediation as the common denominator and the basis of all existing power activities, and we can explore and perceive the functional relations and the diversity of power relations in everyday life. This will be the first step in rebuilding everyday life that is based on potential meanings, which have been hidden and marginalised. These potential meanings have potentials for constructing everyday life more justly and desirably as the realm of the equal appearance of all groups, classes, genders, races and religions. This research attempts to grasp some aspects of the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class in order to find what meanings, in favour of which form of power, construct the current conditions of everyday life. The study of everyday life is beneficial in order to reveal hidden potentials, which have been marginalised in this realm. This revelation is impossible unless we understand what meanings now construct this everyday according to the study's context.

If we divide Lefebvre's project in studying the everyday life into three particular parts, in the first, Lefebvre speaks about the importance of the study of everyday life. In the second, he addresses the various relationships in everyday life and the question of what, and how, different forms of power affect everyday life, becomes important for him. In the third and last part, he particularises the ultimate purpose of his study of everyday life.

Accordingly, the main question of this research will relate to the second part of Lefebvre's project of studying everyday life: what meanings construct the Tehranian middle class's everyday life, and how do these meanings become the preferred meanings in this realm?

To grasp meanings, which create everyday life and address relations that flow into the heart of everyday life, having a consistent theoretical framework for this analysis seems to be necessary. This research tries to analyse power relations within everyday life by an approach instead of systematic analysis of power relations, as Lefebvre has applied in his analysis. This means that by dividing Lefebvre's thoughts to consider everyday life in three parts, the second part, which is related to the analysis of power

relations, would be investigated by a broader theoretical analysis of power than that which Lefebvre has suggested. During the ensuing part of this chapter, I am going to present the approach of this research in studying power relations within everyday life, which is the Foucauldian approach.

In this research, I am going to utilise the Foucauldian approach to the notion of power and I will elaborate on this approach, and why I have chosen it, in order to grasp power relations. Applying this approach inevitably leads to consideration of the notion of discourse, as the meaning making matter, which I will discuss consequently.

I can express two significant reasons for theoretically distancing myself from Lefebvre's systematic analysis of power relations. Firstly, Lefebvre's systematic method of analysing power relations is particular to societies, which their cultural, economic and political systems have developed through the effect of the capitalist system. Mostly, the intention of Lefebvre in addressing the dominant power is in the capitalist systems, and he believes that what colonised everyday life is capitalism. Considering my study's case, which is Iranian society, and considering the absence of the western form of capitalist system in Iran, compared with those in western countries, it seems crucial to have a theoretical formation that is more appropriate to investigating the conditions of the context.

The second reason for avoiding the systematic way of analysing power relations is related to the general approach and the aim of this research. This research, which considers the articulation of hegemonic power within Iranian everyday life and through media, is going to be carried out under the influence of the Cultural Studies approach. The Cultural Studies tradition relating to the issue of power relations does not apply the systematic method of analysis as Lefebvre has suggested. In this chapter I am going to elaborate on the Foucauldian approach of this research to the issue of power, which is consistent with the general Cultural Studies approach.

FOUCAULDIAN APPROACH TO THE NOTION OF POWER

Foucault's approach to power is not to theorise on this issue. What he proposed in relation to power was not a theory, but is an analysis of power. In his point of view, this analysis stands against a general theory of power (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982,

p.184). He believes that, instead of constructing a theory about power, we must create an analytical system with which to perceive the relations of power.

If one tries to erect a theory of power one will always be obliged to view it as emerging at a given place and time and hence to deduce it, to reconstruct its genesis. But if power is in reality an open, more or less coordinated (in the event, no doubt, ill-coordinated) cluster of relations, then the only problem is to provide oneself with a grid of analysis which makes possible an analytic of relations of power. (Foucault, 1980, p199)

Foucault (1982) believes that, in relation to the issue of power, instead of having an integrated look at the application of power in everyday life from the top to the bottom, or a restricted look at the political institutions, and even governmental power; we should consider micro-practices and analyse these behaviours in the sphere of the everyday. This leads to a better perception of power relations within society.

The power is not just limited to political institutions, and power is not just applied from these institutions, but power works both from the bottom to the top and vice versa. Power is the general frame for all mandatory relationships formed at a specific time and in a particular society. Foucault believes that if we do not deliberate on power relations in the least possible form, and we do not study the unequal power relations in its corporeal and actual forms, then we are involved incorrectly in this assumption that every applied power in society is definitely operated from the top to the bottom by political macro institutions. The domination of actual social classes, or of totalitarian governments, is thus not the main matter of power. Indeed, it is true that in every society both dominant and marginalised classes exist, and the marginalised classes are subject to the operation of evident power more than the other classes are, but Foucault believes that power is applied both on the dominant and the dominated classes. The dominant class was exposed to the power before the dominated class. The values of power should firstly have been fixed in this class, which is supposed to be a dominant class, and then those values flowed and were dictated to the rest of society through the meanings of the created dominant class (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

In Foucault's argument (1980), power relations are intentional and non-subjective, Intentional allusions that there is no power that operates without any pre-existing collection of aims and goals, and the non-subjective signifies that the power has been

applied previously on the person who now seems to be the applying subject of that power. The power is not an institution or construction, but power is the name that we give to the complex strategic relations in a particular society. As he argues: *"People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what, what the do does."* (Foucault, quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p187)

Foucault believes that the power, for us, is not just a theoretical issue, but has evolved tightly with our everyday experiences. The power, in this sense, could be grasped as being the systems that Lefebvre sees as the mediators of domination. However, he sees the application of power within societies from the top to the bottom by considering the systems that colonise everyday life. Nonetheless, the power, in its Foucauldian sense, constructs everyday life by the application of processes of subjectification. Later in this chapter I will argue that what could be the hidden potentials in everyday life that Lefebvre mentioned are used when we analyse power relations within everyday life using the Foucauldian insight.

What Foucault suggests for the analysis of power relations, is to start by analysing micro-practices and to demonstrate the role of power in forming these practices. He argues that other ways to analyse the concept of power mostly understand the power that is related to institutional forms of power application. Nonetheless if we want to distance ourselves from these points of view and to have an alternative approach to analysing power relations, we need a mediator that makes us able to undertake this analysis. Foucault suggests that this mediator could be considered as the forms of social micro-practices within everyday life.

To understand power relations, we may study and perceive attempts, which aim to construct and reconstruct the existing order of micro-practices within society. In my opinion this is the exact point that Foucault's perception of power associates with the notion of everyday life. Micro-practices are being formed and become meaningful in the sphere of everyday life; micro-practices form everyday life that is allied to power relations. If power, -not in macro forms, but in micro forms- is the issue for consideration, then everyday life, as the manifestation realm of micro-practices should be considered. Everyday life is full of detail and the micro-practices that are related to these details. This approach to power, and also to everyday life, as Lefebvre argued,

will lead to an exploration of the hidden potentials of everyday life in forming micro-practices, and meanwhile these practices are being formed according to constructed meanings that are the results of a specific form of power articulation. Revealing the current form of power relations will lead to an exploration of potentials, which have been ignored in forming the current order of relations. This will also lead to the revelation of processes that form individual and collective identities (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

The power, which is applied on people's immediate everyday life, influences the processes of gaining an identity. People know themselves through the process of gaining identity from society. This process is dramatically under the effect of power, so people's identity, and the way they are defining and recognising themselves, is continuing under the effect of power. This process is the one that Foucault called "subjectification" (Deleuze, 2006, p101). Foucault believes that revealing power relations in micro-practices within everyday life that are affected by the processes of subjectification, could lead to resistance to the process of subjectification by a particular form of power (Foucault, 1982).

This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise in him. It is a form of power, which makes individuals subject. There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject. (Foucault, cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p 212)

In Foucault's opinion, the political forms of power which governments represent are different in particular societies. Different kinds of political power systems affect everyday life differently. Nevertheless, Foucault believes that what is common to different political forms of power, is their attempts to dominate a class or a group among all of their citizens (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). This domination becomes possible when the identities of other people are formed in acceptance of the desired and preferred meanings of the dominant class. This power is that same power that dominates individuals' identity and makes people the subjects of power.

Forms of subjectification may thus arise alongside governmental activities, and consequently forms of resistance against this kind of power become identifiable by revealing forms of subjectification. The aim of resistance, in this sense, is to demonstrate the hidden and ignored potentials that can be effective in forming individuals' identities, by revealing the dominant form of subjectification. The ultimate goal of resistance is thus not to liberate individuals only from the domination of governments, political institutions and systems, as Lefebvre has suggested, but to liberate us from a way of subjectification that arises alongside governmental domination (Featherstone, 1991).

The political, ethical, social, philosophical problems of our days are not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries. (Foucault, cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p216)

It is vital to mention that forms of power, which do not give individuals the right of choice, are not considered as power in Foucault's reading of power. The right and power of choice is a matter of subjectification. This choice is considered to be the fact that forms and creates different forms of subjectivity. The right to choice provides the possibility of the non-conformity of subjectivities, and may form resistance against a particular form of subjectification. Forms of resistance are becoming meaningful and determinable by revealing dominant forms of subjectification and this can lead to the transformation of power articulations within everyday life. Resistance in the everyday, in this sense, means revealing the hidden potential of the everyday, which present alternative forms of subjectification.

Considering that Foucault distinguishes a nature of subjectification for power, it seems crucial to answer this question: how does power make its subjects? Or, how do individuals become the subjects of power and obtain meanings, through which their acts, behaviours, and even their minds, are formed? In other words, how do individuals receive particular meanings and, accordingly, how do they form their lifestyle? By what process, and how, do particular meanings become preferred by individuals, and how do those meanings form their identities?

Due to this concern, Foucault has formed a notion that, by understanding this concept, it would be possible to grasp power relations in a particular context. This notion would help us to answer this question: How does power flow in societies, and how does power make individuals its subjects? This notion is called “discourse”.

DISCOURSE THROUGH THE FOUCAULDIAN APPROACH

In recent decades, the concept of discourse has been evaluated and has become important, especially among western scholars. Analysing this concept in each context and relating the abstract description of the concept to the concrete circumstances of its appearances has become the major aim of lots of the research that has been done, in recent decades. Although this concept was used by earlier thinkers, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes, and as Torfing (1999, p84) has mentioned, it is possible to find the basis of discussion about this concept in Immanuel Kant’s philosophy and in Husserl’s phenomenology, but the recent application of this concept is totally different. Foucault was one of the most prominent thinkers who has evolved and developed the concept of discourse. He has expanded this concept so that lots of different intellectual attitudes, like poststructuralism are now using the concept of discourse in its Foucauldian sense.

In this section, my aim, after a brief description of Foucault’s concept of discourse, is to presents an interpretation of this concept. This interpretation, firstly, does not have any contradiction with the Foucauldian sense of discourse, and, secondly, it gives me a framework, through which, accordingly, the method of my research, using discourse analysis, becomes clarified. This insight into the concept of discourse will be elaborated in the continuation of this chapter through the theory of discourse analysis suggested by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Before elaborating Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, I will briefly describe the notion of discourse in its Foucauldian sense.

Foucault believes that discourses are acts that systematically form subjects. Discourses are not talking about subjects, and they do not determine the identities of subjects, but they create subjects. In the process of this creation, each discourse tries to hide its interference and lets subjects talk on its behalf (1972, p37).

Here, the meaning of subject is similar to what Foucault meant in the analysis of power relations. He argued that the aim of power is to create subjects, which the power is applied through their subjectivities and by them. These subjects, which have been created by power, become mediations for its application. So it is obvious that, in Foucault's thoughts, different kinds of power construct their subjects by creating and developing different discourses. Subjects are constructed in and by discourses. In Foucault's point of view, each discourse in each historical era has a collection of negative and positive rules, regulations and laws. These collections determine which issues are tolerable to speak about in each era and context, and which issues are not (Foucault, 1980, 1972). In other words, issues that it is possible or it is not possible to open a discussion about are determined by discourses. These unwritten collections of rules and regulations dominate behaviours, speech, and writing, and they form discourses in different historical eras, and even in geographical places. As Torfing explains,

Our cognitions and speech-acts only become meaningful within a certain pre-established discourse. However, there are two important differences between classical transcendentalism and contemporary theories of discourse. First, while classical transcendentalism conceives the conditions of possibility as ahistorical and invariable, the theories of discourse insist on the historicity and variability of discourse. (Torfing, 1999, p84)

Different and dissimilar discourses present different ways of understanding the world, or even one aspect of it. Different understandings of the world among various people are based on the different discourses from which individuals gain their life's meaning. Being the subjects of different discourses means having different understandings of the world, so different discourses construct different identities for different individuals (Laclau, 1993a, p435).

Challenges and the differences between dissimilar kinds of knowledge in the investigation and analysis of a particular issue can be understood according to the differences among discourses. Each discourse presents its preferred knowledge to investigate a specific issue, such as a social phenomenon (Foucault, 1977, p27).

The world has a discursive order and objects, ideas, behaviours, manners, etc., become meaningful according to discourses. So the world may gain a different meaning and

can be grasped differently through different discursive perspectives (Dyrberg, 1997, p90). In other words, although, ontologically, the world has unity, epistemologically we are facing different worlds and living in multiple worlds. When we speak about different discourses, it seems necessary to determine the domains and boundaries of each discourse according to its basic assumptions. Otherwise, assuming the existence of different and dissimilar discourses would be nonsense. Although, when we can successfully describe a complicated and developed system among various numbers of statements, theorems and propositions, and can determine its limits and domains, then we can say that we are facing a discursive formation (Smart, 2002, p40). This determination and description will be possible when we can discover some kind of regularity that relates to different features, like order, dependency, reciprocal relations, circumstances, functions, transitions and displacement, among matters, things, statements, theorems, concepts, contents, and propositions (Macdonell, 1986, p40).

According to the dominant rules and regulations of each discourse, intentions are defined, subjects are constructed and issues are formed. It is worth noting that Foucault doesn't stand just at the level of describing the dominant regulation of each discourse, but he relates the discursive nature of thinking to the social nature of discourses. As discourses cannot exist only in the abstract world and inexplicitly, so they must be something that embodies discourses in the concrete world (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982)

In reality, and in the concrete world, social, economic and cultural behaviours and institutions support different discourses and embody them. So, discourses are not abstract notions but the methods of existence of discourses are basically materialistic and there has to be some concrete social mechanism for discourse to represent them in social realms (Macdonell, 1986).

Foucault (1980, 1972) believes that each discourse has been formed according to limited numbers of statements. These statements need specific conditions, according to their functions, to emerge in the social world. So discourses, in this meaning, are not ideal and eternal, but they are temporal and historical. In Foucault's thoughts, truth is the product of discourses and is discursively constructed. Different regimes of knowledge are determining, in different historical eras, that what is right (true) and

what is wrong (false). Hence, searching for pure truth outside discourses would be a vain attempt (1980, p118).

The ultimate aim of Foucault, in considering discourses, is to search for different regimes of knowledge, which determine what is true and what is false, what is expressible and what is not expressible (Smart, 2002). From Foucault's point of view, what has to be studied and analysed is discursive process, and discourses are formed through them. These formed discourses draw the impression that, with empathy and acceptance of their discursive statements, the true image of reality has been provided for us. As Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) therefore argue:

Foucault claims that it is not possible to gain access to universal truth since it is impossible to talk from a position outside discourse; there is no escape from representation. 'Truth effects' are created within discourses. In Foucault's archaeological phase, 'truth' is understood as a system of procedures for the production, regulation and diffusion of statements. In his genealogical phase, he makes a link between truth and power, arguing that 'truth' is embedded in, and produced by, systems of power. Because truth is unattainable, it is fruitless to ask whether something is true or false. Instead, the focus should be on how effects of truth are created in discourses. What is to be analysed are the discursive processes through which discourses are constructed in ways that give the impression that they represent true or false pictures of reality. (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p14).

Here, it is worth mentioning that in his archaeological phase, Foucault wants to explain the discursive formation rules, which construct a particular discourse. Archaeology emphasises the break between different historical eras and wants to recognise these as independent and distinct eras. This can lead to the discovery of homogenous features and the dominant rules of a historical regime of knowledge (Smart, 2002, p62). Foucault's approach, in his more latter works is genealogy. Relations between power, knowledge and truth became Foucault's main concern in the genealogical phase. In fact Foucault's genealogy is tied to the centrality of power in the formation of discourses, identities and institutions. This approach attempts to emphasise the power-centric nature of discourses (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p392) and, obviously, this research has taken benefits from Foucault's thoughts in his genealogical phase.

The processes of discourse's formation are really important for consideration, in Foucault's point of view. He believes that, during these processes, some discourses

become forbidden, some become suppressed and some become acceptable. Discourses, in these processes, are divided in categories like reasonable and unreasonable, rational and irrational, true and false (Foucault, 1972, p190). During a process, which was named by Foucault as “the will to truth”, reasonable, rational and true discourses become preferred. Foucault wants to discover rules and regulations, which are involved in determining true and false, reasonable and unreasonable, rational and irrational (Torring, 1999, p91).

The aim of this research in addressing the concept of discourse is therefore to obtain an explanation of discourse, which provides possibilities to deliberate on the main question of this research. Namely, the aim of this research in relation to the question of power and the notion of discourse is to discover and understand power-centred processes, which aim to make subjects for the IRdisc.

So, instead of expanding the concept of discourse by Foucault, in the next section I will refer to different accounts of the notion of discourse and then I will emphasise a theory that helps me in doing contextual discourse analysis both in theory and the derived method accordingly.

Different Accounts of the Notion of Discourse

Arguably the recent application of the concept of discourse in various studies in different fields of social science, which intend to carry out a kind of discourse analysis, have been influenced by Foucault’s considerations on this notion, even though different forms of discourse analysis have emerged and theorised regarding different definitions of the notion of discourse (Fairclough, 2003, p2). The main reason that has caused the formation of different discourse theories and application of different forms of discourse analysis is the debate over determining the extent of discourse in constructing the social and making meaning in regard to social phenomena (Mills, 2004, p9).

Considering the nature of discourse in Foucault’s thoughts, which emphasises the construction of social, political and cultural identities—or in Foucault’s term, subjectivities—by the mediation of discourses (Foucault, 1972, p49), the question of dividing non-discursive from discursive in this construction is the centre of consideration by different forms of discourse analysis or discourse theories. Responses

to the question of is it possible to determine discursive from non-discursive, have formed different definition of the concept of discourse depending on the position of researchers regarding debates between poststructuralists and structuralists over the essence of structures.

Apart from the struggles between poststructuralist and structuralist scholars, arguably, poststructuralism is not a school of thought in opposition to structuralism. Rather poststructuralism has been formed in continuation of structuralism, since the jumping-off place of both schools is language (Williams, 2005, p61). Both schools consider language as the starting point of meaning making processes within societies. The main difference between these two schools is in their approach to language as structure. For instance, Saussurian linguistic thoughts, which are based on structuralist thoughts, distinguish two different functions and scopes of language. Saussure elaborates one of them as *langue* (the system of language or the general section of language) and the other one as *parole* (language in its use and functions). In the structuralist point of view, *parole* is changeable, namely the function and use of language could be different in different contextual circumstances and could lead to production of different meanings, but language as the structure of expression is fixed and constant (Saussure, 1974). Expanding the main argument of structuralism, which insists on existence of consistent determining structures, these structures could be any transcendental notion which structurally determines conditions of being social, like economy or ideology. Nonetheless poststructuralists reject the idea of essential structures and emphasise discursive nature of power relations in even forming structures which may seem constant and unchangeable (Williams, 2005, p8).

Based on this understanding of structure, various forms of discourse analysis have been formed regarding their understanding of structures and the extent they consider for discursive practices in constructing the social (van Dijk, 1997).

Although, Foucault in his archaeological phase, inspired by classical Marxism thoughts, believed that rules of different discursive formations have been conditioned by non-discursive relations (Foucault 1972, 1981), in his genealogical phase, after elaborating analysis of power relations, Foucault is less concerned about dividing discursive from non-discursive and insists on constitutive relation between power and discourse and impossibility of having one without the other (Torring, 2005, p7). For instance,

Foucault, contrary to Habermas who sees the ideal type of communication and rationality as relations which have eliminated power (Habermas, 1985), believes that both rationality and communication are been constituted through discursive power struggles (Foucault, 1980).

It is worth mentioning that although it is possible to consider some feature of structuralist thoughts in Foucault's archaeological phase, but as mentioned before, he, after expanding his analysis of power relations and after elaborating the centrality of power relations in forming, embedding and producing the truth in his genealogical phase (Foucault, 1986); has become the most prominent figure that has influenced poststructuralist thoughts in rejecting the idea of attainability of truth or perpetual structures. Foucault by rejecting essential structures and also by declining the centrality of human subjects as the source of application of power, has emphasised the discursive feature of power relations within societies.

Considering the importance of the notion of discourse by Foucault, and debates over determining the extent of discursive practices in constructing the social; various methods of discourse analysis based on their definition of notion of discourse and determining the scope of discourse have been formed. In this regard Torfing (2005) has distinguished three generation of discourse theories. The first one considers discourses as linguistic practices and focuses on semantic aspects of written or spoken texts by applying methods like content analysis, conversation analysis or ethnomethodology (van Dijk, 1997, p3). In this kind of discourse analysis, discourse is defined as linguistic sense of textual unit that is more extensive than a sentence. The conditions of emergence of discourses and rules that may govern discourses are neglected in these kinds of analysis and conditions of discursive practices, not related to power relations (Torfing, 2005).

The second generation which is more considerate about discursive practices, which lead to the construction of social, political and cultural identities and is more analytical regarding dynamics of power relations and discursive practices; is more influenced by Foucault in his archaeological phase. Analyses of this generation, firstly, are intending to analyse practices which construct subjects and identities and secondly, are considering division between discursive and non-discursive. The school of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that is mostly inspired by Fairclough's contributions to the

notion of discourse both in theory and application of methods (Fairclough, 1992 1995), is the most important form of discourse analysis of the second generation. In CDA the quasi-transcendental conception of discourse is rejected. In this approach discourse has been considered as a subset of social practices and is defined as empirical collection of practices that contain semiotic elements. However, the conditions of formation of discourses are tightly related to power relations in its Foucauldian sense (Torring, 2005). Nonetheless in CDA some extra-discursive essentials like ideology are considered as influential factors in naturalising contingently constructed meanings within discourses. In CDA it seems that discourse is considered as a mechanism that is embedded in the independently existing structure of society (Wodak, 2001, p65). I believe the main controversial difficulty in adopting CDA as the theory of discourse analysis is determining the relation between discursive and its non-discursive context. However, CDA benefits from consistent and influential methods in analysing actual forms and contents of linguistic statements and semiotic practices and relating these to more widespread power relations.

The third generation of discourse analysis which this research benefits from is consistent with poststructuralist thoughts and insists on contingent discursive meaning of all social phenomena since they get their meaning from de-centred system of meaning construction. Centre here means any concept or structure that may seem consistent or perpetual like economy, ideology or social classes. Derrida (1978), as one the most prominent figures that supports this idea, believes that there is no determinative centre or essential structure regarding making meaning for social phenomena that its conditions of being essentially remain perpetual and unchangeable. Therefore, in each discursive formation, formation of meaning could continue infinitely and all structures and centres are provisional and may change or be displaced. In this generation, discourses are matters that make meaning for all social phenomena, but these meanings are partially fixed in and through discourses, which even construct meaning for objects (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

Laclau and Mouffe, based on poststructuralist assumptions regarding impossibility of having perpetual structures, and inspired by Foucault's analysis of power relations and discourse, have fashioned a coherent framework of discourse theory. The main concern in this framework is contribution to the change of discursive formations in

order to bring out the possibility of change from the heart of the social through understanding rules that govern the production of the social within discursive practices. Similar to Foucault, in his genealogical phase, Laclau and Mouffe in their discourse theory are not concerned with the truth or actual meaning of practices; rather they seek the conditions and rules of possibility of these meanings in order to change them.

I should point out that Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (DT) is a development of and departure from the second generation of discourse analysis as poststructuralism is a development of structuralism. As Sjolander and Ryne (2011) argue, there are many similarities and also a few differences between CDA and DT. Overlaps are both being influenced by: Foucauldian perspective of discourse, Gramscian hegemony theory and Althusser's thoughts of interpellation. Also, both see connections between power and discourse within processes of subjectification and believe our understandings of the world are socially constructed or discursively formed. In addition, both will contribute to social changes and believe in eventual changes of society (pp32-37). Torfing (2005) also believes differences between Fairclough and Laclau/Mouffe are small and there is not much to say, since in methods, both are concerned to analyse every text in its context by application of interpretative theories and methods in order to link micro and macro practices or agency and structures. However, in theory, the main difference is that in DT Laclau and Mouffe do not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive; since, they believe the meaning of everything is discursively constructed and reject the idea of existence of any determining extra-discursive power at the level of economy or ideology (Laclau and Mouffe's perception of the concept of ideology will be discussed within the coming sections of this chapter). Nevertheless, in CDA, Fairclough distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive and believes that discourses are somehow determined by extra discursive powers. Regarding the methods, CDA established the rich and detailed conceptual framework for analysing rhetoric of texts, however in DT, articulatory practices within texts are the subject of consideration. The methodology of CDA is blamed for its mechanical use of methods and balkanisation and reification of methodology, which leads to method-driven researches rather than problem-driven considerations (Howarth, 2005, pp317-18). This research has been done under the influence of DT, in both theory and methods and in

the next sections I will elaborate the framework of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory in detail.

LACLAU AND MOUFFE'S PERCEPTION OF THE NOTION OF DISCOURSE

The concept of discourse in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis has been elaborated in Foucault's discourse theories. Discourse, in their point of view, is a system of meaning that is even bigger than language (Smith, 1998, p85). Each discourse has become dominant in a different realm of society. Discourses form collective and individual behaviours by taking over their subject's minds. Laclau and Mouffe have also used the Foucauldian notion of power in their discourse theory (Laclau 1993a). Foucault knows power is the driving force of society. He believed that this driving force became visible and emerged in societies in discursive forms. Laclau and Mouffe also believed that power, by emerging in its discursive form, is the driving force of societies. Laclau and Mouffe emphasise the power role in the development of different social formations. They believe that power is the driving force for all of the mechanisms and processes that make meaning in social life (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p21). According to the Foucauldian notion of power in his genealogy theory, Laclau believes that the elimination of power causes the dispersion and disintegration of society. So it would be impossible to imagine a society without power relations (Laclau, 1990, p32).

Notable differences between the Laclau/Mouffe approach and Foucault's approach to the concept of discourse can be summarised in two points. Firstly in explanation of discourse's structures, Laclau and Mouffe use the Saussurian concept "sign"⁵, instead of "statement", which was used by Foucault. Secondly, in Laclau and Mouffe's approach there is no difference between the discursive and the non-discursive, they see all phenomena as discursive matters (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p19).

The concept of discursive formation, in Foucault, is also analogous to the concept of articulation in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis. Since articulation, in their theory, is acknowledged as the process in which signs are binding together through its use and thus creates a particular meaning system. It can be said that using signs

⁵ Sign is constructed through the relationship between the signifier (or expression) and the signified (or content).

instead of statements, as in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, is a minor displacement that has caused there to be more flexibility in their theory.

Laclau and Mouffe, with reference to the Saussurean linguistics, argue that discourses make the social world within the meanings. This creation is done by language, and language has an unstable essence. Language is not only playing a role in the representation of the reality, but also has a fundamental efficacy in creating reality. The access to reality is possible just through language, and there is no *a priori* predetermined reality. Changes in discourses will cause changes in a whole social system. Hence, disputes between discourses may cause either changes in a system of meanings, or the reproduction of the social reality (1985, pp105-14).

It seems that the relationship between discourse and reality is a constructive relationship in Laclau and Mouffe's thoughts. From their point of view, historical, social and cultural requirements and desires are constructed by the dominant discourses in each epoch. While these desires can claim a specific discursive formation (articulation) and make it dominant in the other epoch. Discourses reconstruct their meaning systems according to social and political requirements and demands. The shortcomings of the dominant discourse in solving existent social problems will cause other rivals discourses to provide their own solutions to overcome social difficulties (Smith, 1998, p50). It must be said that these problems are considered to be problems in the meaning system of the dominant discursive articulation, because they affect the practical functions of the dominant discourse in some social aspects. Consequently, it can be concluded that discourses are not immutable, closed matters. Discourses redefine their system of meaning and articulation according to the type of relationship that they have with other discourses. When a discourse can establish its system of meaning among its subjects (in other words, can make subjects according to its meaning system) and partly achieves a consistency and closure, then it has become the hegemonic discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p166). The articulation of a discourse is a sort of active and relational articulation. When the meaning system of a discourse loses its adaptation to the concrete world and current circumstances challenge its articulation, then we can say that discourse has started to decline. This decline will be the result of the incompatibility of the meaning system of the discourse with the concrete world. Inversely, when a discourse can adapt its meaning system to the on-

going circumstances of the social world, then its level of acceptability will increase among its subjects and agents (Laclau, 1990, p66). Overcoming the difficulties, which are affecting the existing articulation of a discourse, will cause satisfaction in the current meaning system by the social agents. In other words, it will increase the number of subjects for discourses, both qualitatively and slightly. A discourse thus makes itself the hegemonic discourse. The consequence of becoming hegemonic, for a discourse, is the highlighting of its system of meaning and of marginalising other rivals' discourses. In the coming parts of this section, I will elaborate on exactly what hegemony means. Considering the idea of the impossibility of closure in the meaning system of discourses, Jorgensen and Phillips believe:

The overall idea of discourse theory is that social phenomena are never finished or total. Meaning can never be ultimately fixed and this opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects. The discourse analyst's task is to plot the course of these struggles to fix meaning at all levels of the social. (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p24).

A Conceptual Framework for Discourse Analysis

If we want to take advantages of the theoretical potentials of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis for analysing social, cultural and political phenomena (Iranian everyday life and state TV, in my research case), we have to be familiar with some terms and concepts, which they have used in order to establish their theory. The concept of articulation is one of the most important concepts that they have used.

In addition to the significance of this concept in the development of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of discourse analysis, articulation as both theory and method, has influenced the cultural studies tradition. Grossberg (1993) believes that utilising the theory of articulation has transformed cultural studies from a model of communication to a theory of contexts. Daryl Slack believes articulation, as a method, suggests a methodological framework for cultural analysis and also provides strategies for contextualising the object of study in cultural analysis (Slack, in Morley and Chen ed., 1996). Hall believes articulation is:

the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness.' The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. (Hall, 1986b, p53)

Hall thus believes that the theory of articulation brings us the possibility of understanding under which circumstances different elements cohere together within a discourse. This attitude to the notion of articulation, an emphasis on social processes that link different elements in order to make sense of life for subjects who acknowledge this linkage in their subjectivities. Considering those linkages between different elements in an articulation are therefore not essential, as Hall suggested, we need to think about the conditions that caused this, not the necessary connections (Grossberg, 1996). Considering these conditions, means contextually determine forces are attempting to constitute particular linkages between different elements. As Slack has argued: *"To understand the role of articulation in cultural studies is thus to map that play of forces, in other words, to track its development genealogically"* (Slack in Morley and Chen ed., 1996, p 115).

Articulation is an act that forms such a relationship between different ingredients like concepts, signs, behaviours, etc. In the process of articulation the former identity of those ingredients is transformed, and they are going to be gained from the new one. The identity of a discourse is therefore formed according to the relationship it establishes between different ingredients by the act of articulation. In fact, discourses are systematic orders, which are acquired in the result of the articulation of connected concepts and ingredients. These systematic orders include various numbers of signs, which are meaningfully connected to each other in a wider network. In the other words, the articulation is a process that constructs a coherent collection of individuals, concepts and terminologies to make sense of life. Laclau and Mouffe define articulation as:

We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements

such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice .The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated. (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p105)

Actually, here, the method of discourse analysis becomes meaningful. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) believe discourse analysis is an attempt to understand processes, which fix preferred meanings according to different signs in a particular discourse:

It is precisely those constant attempts that never completely succeed which are the entry point for discourse analysis. The aim of discourse analysis is to map out the processes in which we struggle about the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed, and the processes by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalised that we think of them as natural. (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p25-26)

In a discourse, Laclau and Mouffe believe that all signs gain their meaning in relationship to other signs. All signs in a particular discourse gather around a central signifier. Laclau and Mouffe named that central signifier the “nodal point” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p112). The meanings of all signs are understandable in relation to the nodal point. Discourse is an attempt to fix the meaning of all its signs in the process of articulation. Namely, this attempt wants to eradicate all possible meanings that a sign can have, and to highlight a particular preferred meaning. When a sign doesn’t have a fixed meaning in a particular discourse, and it is possible to relate it to a numbers of meanings, Laclau and Mouffe call that sign an “element”. While they call a sign with a specific preferred meaning which is obtained in the process of articulation by a discourse around the nodal point a “moment”. The articulation of a discourse is an attempt to transform all “elements” to “moments” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p111). This attempt is implemented during the procedure that is called “exclusion” by Laclau and Mouffe. Exclusion is the procedure, which excludes all possible meanings for an element, and prefers and selects a particular meaning among all imaginable meanings. A collection of all the imaginable meanings for an element is called a “field of discursivity” by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p111). The articulation of a discourse becomes possible by selecting and preferring a meaning for a sign among those in a

field of discursivity. In fact, the field of discursivity is the product of the articulation of a discourse. This field is a collection of the removed meanings for the signs in a discourse, which has been shaped in the process of the articulation. The articulation prefers a particular meaning that is related to a sign, while, rationally, it is possible that this particular sign had a different meaning beforehand, or that it currently has a different meaning in other discourses with different articulations.

These meanings may possibly be totally different, or even in opposition to each other. Laclau and Mouffe believe that the meanings of signs form a meaningful discourse in their relation to each other. Signs or moments in a discourse have to be meaningful when we see them as a whole; they have to make sense in relationship to each other. Otherwise, the articulation of a discourse is not a successful one and the discourse cannot be a hegemonic one (ibid). We can therefore conclude that the ultimate goal of a discourse is to fix its preferred meanings for all signs, and to transform all elements into moments. When a discourse can fix all its preferred meanings and demolish the polysemic essence of signs, then that discourse establishes a “closure” (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002, p28). A discourse can establish a closure when it conquers the possibility of gaining other meanings from its moments. Nonetheless, the important argument in Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is that the closure of a discourse cannot be permanent. Although a discourse has the possibility to reach temporary closure, but this closure and the process of transforming elements to moments cannot be perpetual.

Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is similar to Saussurian linguistics, in the sense of the connection between the signifier and the signified⁶. Similar to Saussure, Laclau and Mouffe see this link between the signifier and the signified as being conventional and arbitrary. Furthermore, in their point of view, this link being established within articulatory practices of discourses, since on the one hand they don’t recognise non-discursive meanings and on the other hand they see discourses more than the language. To consider arbitrary linkages between the signified and the signifier is the ontological anti essentialist principle of Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse analysis. When Laclau and Mouffe argue that links between the signifier and the signified are arbitrary

⁶ The signified is the concept (or content) that is expressed by a certain signifier, and the signifier is the sound-image (or expression) that signifies a certain signified (Torfing, 1999, p305).

and temporary, it means that they suppose all connotations are discursively constructed (Howarth, 2000, p114).

Laclau and Mouffe take the possibility of the ambiguity of meanings in discourses by an adaption of Derrida's poststructuralist approach in the connection between the signifier and the signified (Smith, 1998, p85). The existence of different meanings for a particular sign in everyday life, and the possibility of different understandings and applications for a similar word in everyday life show the instability of the signifier and the signified connection. For instance, it is possible to find different understandings of signifiers like freedom, justice, rationality, Islam, etc., among different people in different historical epochs or geographical places. Laclau and Mouffe believe that there is no essence of the meanings of these signifiers. Although different discourses offer different meanings for similar signifiers, but none of them has inherent superiority over the other one. A particular signifier can have a different signified, since discourses cannot establish perpetual closure. In the continuation of this section, I will explain the ways in which discourses want to present their preferred meanings for signifiers as the essential meanings.

The principle of the impossibility of closure in Laclau and Mouffe's theory leads to the importance another concept. This concept has been called the "floating signifier". The floating signifier is a signifier with a non-fixed signified. This means that a floating signifier is a signifier that has different signifieds (Laclau, 1990, p28). Diverse discourses try to append their preferred signified to a floating signifier in order to construct and fix their desired meaning. This could be feasible in each discourse by trying to marginalise rival discourses' signifieds.

Discourses set floating signifiers in the social sphere alongside each other, like puzzle pieces during the articulation process. They do this in order to present an understandable, acceptable, and rational image of their socio-political system. In fact, a floating signifier is an element, which could be perched in different articulations of dissimilar discourses and so gain different meanings (Laclau, 1993, p287). In short, a floating signifier is a signifier, which has not yet been confiscated by a particular articulation. This means that floating signifiers either don't have fixed meanings in an articulation process, or that they have lost their previously fixed meanings. It is possible that a current floating signifier was previously a moment in a discourse.

Nonetheless, since permanent closure is impossible, it has become a floating signifier, even though it was a moment in a particular discourse. So, other different discourses try to own this floating signifier by placing it in their articulations (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p113). If we want to return to the Lefebvre analysis of hidden potentials in the heart of everyday life, we can now relate the possibility of the existence of those potentials to the concept of the floating signifier. The floating signifier, which can gain different and dissimilar meanings in different discourses, is the same as potentials, which are hidden in everyday life. This means that the possible meanings of a floating signifier can be considered as potentials in everyday life. The impossibility of closure also means that fixed meanings have the potential to be reconsidered in the sense of their meanings. A floating signifier is a potential in itself, which can gain different meanings that are favoured by different discourses' articulations. The adjustment of Lefebvre's analysis of systems, which are dominant in everyday life through Laclau, and Mouffe's discourse analysis would result: some discourses are dominant in everyday life. Considering their objective circumstances and the facilities that they have, those discourses try to fix their preferred meanings for all of the signs in everyday life. This can be done during the process of articulation by marginalising other possible meanings (potentials), and confiscating all floating signifiers.

The principle of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, which emphasises the impossibility of permanent closure in a sign's meaning, will lead to another concept, which is called "deconstruction". The concept of deconstruction highlights the possibility of changing the fixed meanings for moments. It emphasises that, although we take some meanings for some moments for granted, those meanings are essentially unstable and have the chance to change (Laclau, 1993b, p281). Deconstruction can happen on the micro levels, such as the meaning of a particular sign, and also on the macro levels, e.g., in the dominant discourses in the world which leads to the "dislocation" of dominant social orders and structures (Laclau, 1990, pp41-45). The concept of dislocation, in Laclau and Mouffe's theory, refers to crisis and tensions, which challenge the hegemony of a discourse. On one hand, dislocation, by weakening the hegemony of the dominant discourse, is providing the possibility for the emergence of rivals' subjects and new articulations. On the other hand, it encourages the hegemonic dominant discourse to reconstruct itself and to avoid the

deconstruction of its signifieds and meanings (Barrett, 1991, p61). The social world is the construction of dislocations. Social systems are meaningful between the constant and dislocation. Forasmuch as the concept of deconstruction, in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, refers to redefining moments in a discursive articulation and interrelating new meanings to them (Laclau and Zak, 1994), they define the political versus politics, which refers to attempts of the hegemonic discourse in order to avoid the dislocation within existing social orders and structures; as intentions and struggles over separating signifiers from their preferred meanings in the hegemonic articulation, and relating other signifieds to signifiers through imagining alternative meanings (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

Probably, here I should note that considering Lefebvre's view of everyday life and connecting this viewpoint to the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, I can conclude three important points. First, the potentials that Lefebvre has mentioned, that are hidden in everyday life, can be considered as the possibility to offer different meanings to floating signifiers, which could be different to the meanings that the hegemonic discourse is offering for them. Second, systems, which Lefebvre saw as dominant systems that are colonised everyday life, could be considered to be hegemonic discourses and their capabilities. Third, the possibility of subversion that Lefebvre has mentioned in his critique of everyday life can be considered as the possibility of losing a hegemonic discourse its hegemony when it faces the dislocation because of the deconstruction of its preferred meanings, since the closure is impossible.

Contextualising the Conceptual Framework of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Analysis

According to the conceptual framework of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, it seems possible that this theory can be utilised as a method in order to contextualise the subject of the study. Considering the different circumstances that the IRdisc has faced since the revolution of 1979, this discourse has been articulated differently. In the transformations of the IRdisc's articulation, some signifiers have always had the same signified. Namely, some moments are recognisable in all of the different forms of the articulation of this discourse in different contextual conditions. These moments are constructing meanings that are closer to the nodal point of the IRdisc. For instance, the signifier of "Shiite Islam", as the nodal point of the IRdisc has always been linked to the

signified of the supreme leadership and the protectorate of the Islamic Jurists (*Velayat-e faghih*). All of the forces that have tried to present their desired form of articulation under the tent of the IRdisc, as an assumption that the acceptance of the signifier of Shiite Islam and its signified is therefore needed as a moment in their articulation, otherwise these forces were considered as others, and were excluded from the field of discursivity of the IRdisc. By considering the same nodal point in different articulations of the IRdisc, in different historical conditions, the discourse of the Islamic Republic has been articulated differently by different forces. Izadi & Rezaeipanah (2014) argue that since the revolution of 1979, considering objective circumstances, four major, different articulations of the IRdisc are recognisable. In all of them the nodal point is the same, but the articulation is different. The first articulation, which they called the “Islamic leftist”, was the dominant articulation following the establishment of the Islamic Republic’s state up to the end of the war between Iraq and Iran (1981-1989). This articulation, by highlighting signifiers like social justice, the state’s economy, Islamic internationalism and anti-capitalism in the field of political economy; war, martyrdom (*Shahadat*), social mobilisation (*Basij-e Mardomi*), anti-consumerism, anti-western sentiment and anti-aristocratic values in the field of social policies; family, Islamic law (*Sharia*), Shiite Islamic ideology and religious traditions in the field of cultural policies; was attempting to offer an anti-western (specially anti-American) and anti-capitalism position for the IRdisc by emphasising the Islamic nature of this position (Izadi & Rezaeipanah, 2014). This articulation was carried out under certain historical conditions of the war between Iran and Iraq, and also the early years of the establishment of the Islamic Republican state. The notable point is that, although in the field of discursivity of the IRdisc various forces were struggling to offer different articulations, the charismatic supreme leadership of the state, as the signified for the nodal point of the IRdisc, namely Ayatollah Khomeini, by approving the articulation of the so called Islamic leftists in various struggles, caused the hegemony of the mentioned articulation in relation to the IRdisc (Aras, 2001). The government of the day, with the Prime Ministry of *Mir-Hussein Mousavi*, was playing the most significant role in making this articulation the hegemonic one.

After end of the war and the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini, the other form of articulation became hegemonic in relation to the IRdisc. This articulation also, by

approving the centrality of the moment of the supreme leadership as the nodal point, has caused a major transformation in the articulation of the IRdisc. Izadi & Rezaeipناه (2014) call this articulation “Economic Development” under the influence of the “Free Market Economy” approach (1989-1997). This articulation, which emerged under the social and historical conditions of the new supreme leadership (Ayatollah Khamenei), the end of the war, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, emphasised economic development in order to reconstruct following war damage (Adelkhah, 1999, p13). The preferred meanings of this articulation came from the field of discursivity that emerged through the exclusion of the meanings in the previous articulation of the IRdisc. This articulation, by maintaining the ideological values of the IRdisc, and by highlighting signifiers, such as construction, development, economic growth and privatisation, in the field of political economy and, consequently, signifiers like tolerance, rationalism, institutionalisation, etc., in the field of social and cultural policies, was trying to offer a rational technocrat position for the IRdisc and to transform the subjectivity of its citizens from ideological patriotic citizens into ambitious social citizens (Amaniyan, 2005, pp161,162). Again, obviously, different social forces were challenging this articulation, but the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, during the presidency of *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani* on the constructionist cabinet, didn’t get any serious position that was contrary to the general attitudes of this new articulation of the IRdisc, which was represented by *Hashemi* and his technocrat cabinet (Aras, 2001). The establishment of this articulation, by excluding the preferred meanings of the Islamic Leftists’ articulation, has caused a transformation in the Political Economy of the Islamic republican state ever since (Behdad & Nomani, 2002).

The third articulation of the IRdisc, which might be called the “Reformist” articulation (1997-2005), has caused a serious transformation within the cultural structure of Iranian society. This articulation emerged under the influence of various social conditions, such as a growth in the ratio of the younger generation (referred as the third generation of the revolution) to the older, the enhancement of communications facilities like television, satellite and Internet, the importance of international communication, the improvement of the education system, an increase in the urban population and the development of civil society in Iran. Under the effect of the

unpredictable election of *Seyed Mohammad Khatami* as the President of Iran in 1997, a form of articulation of the IRdisc emerged that emphasised the political development, rather than the economic development in the previous articulation (Tazmini, 2009, p 5). Consequently, new political forces arrived on the scene of Iranian politics. The preferred meaning of this articulation regarding the signifier of political economy was the same as the previous articulation. The reformist cabinet merely tried to reform the economic structure of the free market economy in Iran (Nomani & Behdad, 2006). For instance, the tax system was improved, foreign investment became possible, and private banks were established (Pajouyan, et al, 2008, p186). However, this articulation in the social and political realms, by highlighting signifiers like democracy, people, civil society, individual and social freedom, civil rights, minority and women's rights; has caused a serious split among effective forces within the field of discursivity of the IRdisc (Kamrava, 2008, p11). The reformist articulation, by targeting the aim of political development, has emphasised the republican face of the IRdisc, rather than its Islamic face. Although active forces of this articulation were, at least orally, recognising the signifier of the supreme leadership (*Velayat-e Faghih*) as the nodal point of the IRdisc, this articulation caused the emergence of a split between the two active forces of the IRdisc. The split emerged between forces that were emphasising the Islamic face of the IRdisc -- by highlighting the priority of the legitimacy and authority of the supreme leadership, and forces that were emphasising the republican face of this discourse, by emphasising the priority of the legitimacy of law (Mir-Hosseini & Tapper, 2006, pp29, 30). The gap between these two forces, which were known as Principlists (*Osoul-garayan*)⁷ and Reformists (*Eslah-talaban*), has caused an extensive struggle between these two groups in relation to making their articulation the hegemonic one in regard to the IRdisc. This split, and the subsequent struggle between Reformists and Principlists, emerged because of the failure of the reformist articulation to link the mentioned signifiers to the nodal point of the supreme leadership and the protectorate of the Islamic Jurists (*Velayat-e faghih*), (Tazmini, 2009, p36).

⁷ Various scholars, in their writings have cited this group as being Conservatives, but, according to the Persian term (*osoul-garayan*), I prefer to call this group Principlists.

The main result of this gap and this struggle was the emergence of an Islamic republican discourse's articulation, which articulates its preferred meanings in direct relation to the demands of the current supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Although the central signifiers of this principlist articulation, such as social justice, Islamic ideology, Islamic government, Islamic development, Islamic economy, enemy, etc., have also been articulated in previous articulations, this articulation stresses making these elements into moments according to the principles of the Islamic revolution. In this articulation, the sole source that it is legitimate to determine and define through these principles is the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The main principle of this principlist articulation is the determining of the principles according to the interpretations of Khamenei, and following his demands in different social realms such as politics, culture, etc. (Palizban, 2009). As a consequence of the establishment of the mentioned articulation, which has become the dominant articulation since the presidency of *Mahmoud Ahmadinejad* in 2005, the struggle between the Principlists and Reformists in articulating the IRdisc, has intensified. This struggle was intensified more than ever during the Iranian presidential campaigns of 2009, and events that were the aftermaths of this election contextualise the mentioned struggle.

On one hand, all principlist forces were united around *Ahmadinejad*, as the symbol of the principlist articulation of the IRdisc, and, on the other hand, the reformist forces gathered around *Mousavi*, as the symbol of the Reformist articulation. Although in both articulations similar signifiers, such as justice, equality, independence, etc. are recognisable, as mentioned, the approach to determining the signifieds for the same signifiers was different among these forces, accordingly highlighting the Islamic face or the Republican face of the IRdisc.

In advancing this struggle, *Mousavi* had a unique position. He, as the Prime Minister of the early years following the revolution, during the war, stood against an articulation of the IRdisc which was backed by Khamenei and knows itself to be the legitimate extender of those years, namely the Principlists articulation. *Mir-Hossein Mousavi*, a candidate for the presidential election in 2009, as the most prominent political symbol of the early years of the revolution, after Ayatollah Khomeini, could be a great representative for the principles of the IRdisc. This representative could question the legitimacy of the preferred meanings of the Principlists articulation by referring to the

meanings of signifiers in the early years following the revolution, when the charismatic supreme leader, Ayatollah *Khomeini*, was alive. A struggle to seize the meanings of signifiers, like Ayatollah Khomeini, marginalised groups, social solidarity, the 8 years of war and its martyrs, people, justice, freedom, equality, etc., was a struggle that *Mousavi* could properly advance. According to the charter of the Green Movement, which was written and published by *Mousavi*, the main aim of the Green Movement is to reach justice, freedom, independence and equality in all economic, political and social realms, under the tent of the IRdisc (Mousavi, cited in Mohammadpour, 2012). *Mousavi* has never had any oppositional position regarding the IRdisc and has never tried to dislocate the integrity of this discourse, rather, he, and reformists forces, was attempting to deconstruct the meanings of moments within the principlist articulation, which have other potential meanings in the field of discursivity of the IRdisc. *Mousavi* sees the way to reach the aims of the Green Movement through the empowerment of the civil society and the public sphere, establishing a sphere for social dialogues, promoting awareness via the free flow of information, and recognising the plurality within the society (ibid).

Obviously, in this articulation of the IRdisc, under the historical condition of the emergence of the Green Movement and the intensification of the struggle between the Reformists and the Principlists, the supreme leadership has no centrality, rather, this articulation emphasises the neglected potential of the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitutional law in recognising the sovereignty of the people, which was the main purpose of the Islamic revolution (ibid). The Principlist therefore interprets the Reformist articulation as the rival discourse, since the centrality of the nodal point (and its meaning as preferred by Principlists) has been neglected within this articulation. The Principlist articulation recognises a determinative role for the supreme leadership in all of the social aspects of establishing the ideal Islamic state (*Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi*, cited in Palizban, 2009), while the Reformist articulation considers a protectorate role for the Supreme Leader in order to reach the aim of the sovereignty of the people.

Regardless of the truth or unreality of the claims of fraud in the 2009 presidential election, the principlist articulation of the IRdisc has faced a crisis (dislocation), which has questioned the legitimacy of this articulation by deconstructing its central

moments. In the consequences of intensification, the struggle between Reformists and Principlists during the events in the aftermath of the election, forces that were trying to present their desired articulation under the tent of the IRdisc have become antagonistic. Since repressive forces, like the police, courts and judiciary system, because of their affiliation to the supreme leader, as the core of power of the Principlists, the Reformists were eliminated from the field of discursivity of the IRdisc by the mediation of these forces, and the principlist articulation of this discourse became dominant through the support of the supreme leader.

Two years after the emergence of the Green Movement, *Mousavi* was put under house arrest with no legal trial, and by the direct command of Khamenei, *Khatami*, without a legal trial, was banned from all political activities and media presence, and many reformists went to jail because of their political positioning against the Principlists and under pretexts, like dependency on foreigners and western enemies. The Green Movement was called seditious (*Fetneh*) by Ayatollah Khamenei, and he has, since then, commanded the elimination of all seditionists (*Fetneh-garan*) from the realm of politics. I believe this elimination has initiated a new phase of the IRdisc with a more homogenous field of discursivity than ever before, and this made the Reformist articulation the rival discourse to that of the Islamic Republic. Obviously, apart from the political forces that have been eliminated, the Green Movement had a powerful social base among the citizens who participated in advancing this movement. Nonetheless, the question is: is this Principlist articulation (which I call the IRdisc henceforth) hegemonic in constructing the subjectivity of the citizens mentioned, in regard to its preferred meanings?

Laclau and Mouffe by taking advantage of Gramsci's hegemony theory, acknowledge the discourse, which has fixed its preferred meanings for floating signifiers and transforms elements to moments, as the hegemonic discourse. In the following parts of this section I will address the concept of hegemony and how discourses become hegemonic.

HEGEMONY, THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF DISCOURSES

According to the flexibility of the signified and signifier relationship, and the impossibility of closure for a discourse, Laclau and Mouffe conclude that: a discourse

that has temporarily fixed its preferred meanings for floating signifiers, and has transformed elements to moments in its articulation, is a hegemonic discourse. Namely, if there is a consensus in a society around a particular meaning for a particular signifier, and the public opinion has temporarily accepted that meaning, then that signifier is hegemonic. If signifiers for a discourse become hegemonic, then that discourse becomes hegemonic, as a whole. The main function of the hegemony in a discourse is to temporarily fix meanings for signs. Reaching hegemony is the ultimate goal for each discourse. Hegemony for a discourse becomes possible during the process of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

The hegemony of a discourse in the social world is understandable when we discover which meanings are preferred in everyday life. Preferred meanings form the hegemony of a discourse. As Torfing argues:

We can define hegemony as the expansion of a discourse, or set of discourses, into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments in a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces. (1999, p 101)

The Italian intellectual and activist, Antonio Gramsci, mainly developed the concept of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe have therefore also used this concept to expand their discourse theory under the effect of Gramsci's hegemony theory. According to Gramsci, hegemony refers to a situation in which a "historical block" (Gramsci used these words instead of 'dominant class' in orthodox Marxist terminology) has reached the intellectual-moral leadership of the whole society. It means that the "historical block" has a kind of social authority among the people who live in the particular society (Bennet, 1986). Reaching hegemony usually becomes feasible during a process, which contains a combination of elements of both "repression" and "satisfaction". Gramsci believed that the existence of a combination of repression and satisfaction is the main feature that makes it hegemonic. These two elements are moderating each other and the hegemonic historical block always tries to indicate that the force applied onto the minority was based on the satisfaction of the majority (Gramsci, 1971, p80). Since Gramsci is emphasising the existence of the combination of the repression and satisfaction elements in a hegemonic system, we can conclude that hegemony always

requires resistance. Those who are not satisfied by hegemonic values and rules, are resisting the acceptance of hegemonic meanings. The force of the hegemonic system is therefore applied to them. Gramsci believes that the superiority and supremacy of a social group is always manifested in two forms. The first one is the form of the domination, and the second is the form of the intellectual-moral leadership (Barrett, 1991, p59). In Gramsci's point of view, hegemony means the construction of satisfaction and cultural consensus (Gramsci, 1971, p80).

In other words, hegemony means the existence of a kind of self-constructed and spontaneous satisfaction among the people. Hegemonic values and meanings, which are the preferred meanings of hegemonic discourse, become involved in all aspects of social and everyday life. This involvement will cause preferred meanings of hegemonic discourse finally to be considered as common sense by people. These preferred meanings will form the common sense, and will influence customs, habits and tastes (Joll, 1977, p8). People, who follow these rules and who have accepted them as common sense, may not notice that they are living under the domination of a hegemonic articulation. Hegemony refers to a coalition between some social groups in order to achieve authority in the society. This coalition may eventually attain their total social authority over other, subordinated social groups. Applying this authority is not possible merely by the application of force or the direct imposition of the preferred meanings of a discourse. Rather the hegemonic authority becomes achievable by gaining and forming the people's satisfaction. This satisfaction will cause the naturalisation and legitimisation of hegemonic discourse's preferred meanings without using widespread suppression and force application (Barret, 1991, p54).

A hegemonic discourse is always trying to present its methods for constructing the social, as being objective methods, but objectivity is nothing other than dominant sedimentary discourse (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p36). Laclau (1990, p32) believes the identity of individuals and subjects of discourses is formed according to this objectivity. Nevertheless, since there are always different discourses, which exist in each society, and are involved in forming the subjectivity of individuals, Laclau argues that identity is a combinational matter just as there is a hegemonic discourse in each society, which is a combination of different and contradictory elements. What is important here to find out how these elements are perched together in the process of

articulation? Or, as Slack (1996, p115) argued, mapping and tracking the development and play of forces that are trying to construct the subjectivity of social agents. Identities are also formed in a kind of articulation process between the different and dissimilar elements and objectivities. Laclau and Mouffe therefore believe that identities are also not inherent, but they are constructed within articulatory practices (1985, p105). This construction of identities is not an arbitrary act, but depends on the amount and quality of being objectively accessible for different discourses.

The hegemonic system, by promoting and expanding its rules and regulations, tries to reproduce the social structure, which has made this particular discourse the hegemonic one. This means that the hegemonic discourse tries to construct types of identities for its subjects by the minimum involvement of other discourses. The success of hegemonic discourse in doing this will cause the reproduction of the social structures and means the continuity of its hegemony.

Relating a signifier to a particular signified during discursive articulation and temporarily fixing this relation, causes the hegemony of a discourse. As a result, the meaning of that signifier becomes temporarily fixed, and it is transformed into a moment in a hegemonic articulation. Nevertheless, rival discourses and marginalised articulations are trying to swoop on this stability and break down the hegemony of the dominant discourse via deconstructing the meanings of moments in a hegemonic articulation, just as the Reformist articulation aimed to do in the face of the IRdisc, during the Green Movement, by highlighting the face of republicanism in relation to the nodal point of the IRdisc, instead of the Islamic face.

Whatever deconstruction of meanings is closer to the meaning of the nodal point in the hegemonic discourse, the possibility of collapsing the hegemonic discourse becomes greater due to facing the dislocation. The deconstruction of the main meanings of a discourse means aiming the essential meanings that a discourse has fundamentally articulated and formed according to them. The deconstruction of these meanings will therefore cause the collapse of the hegemony of a discourse. When this deconstruction is done at the levels near the nodal point, and causes the dislocation for the hegemonic discourse, it is possible for the hegemonic discourse to apply two strategies to secure itself from collapse and complete deconstruction.

First: start a new articulation regarding the meanings that are the subjects of deconstruction. This could be done in two ways. Firstly, by offering new meanings for deconstructed signifiers. This means that the hegemonic discourse tries to change its articulation somehow so as to save the nodal point and the signs near the nodal point from deconstruction. Or, secondly, by accepting the meanings that are raised by rival discourses, the hegemonic discourse affirms the logic of difference among its subjects. This strategy is more appropriate in regard to signifiers that are far from the nodal point of the discourse. When accepting differences in meanings that are far from the meaning of the nodal point, the hegemonic articulation accordingly encourages more satisfaction among its subjects. This satisfaction increases the possibility that the hegemonic discourse will remain hegemonic.

Second: nevertheless, in facing the deconstruction of meanings that have been preferred regarding the signifiers around the nodal point, a hegemonic discourse, in order to remain hegemonic, uses more suppression forces against efforts, which are aimed at deconstructing the meanings that are near to its nodal point. The antagonism and forcing others will be more obvious in relation to these efforts. Meanwhile, this discourse tries to secure its nodal point from deconstruction by preferring and emphasising meanings relating to the signifiers that are more significant in the discursive articulation in constructing identities for subjects that possibly may become the subjects of rival discourses. These signifiers work like a protective belt around the nodal point. Preferring the desired discursive meaning relating to these signifiers among the subjects may secure the nodal point from being deconstructed. If subjects are satisfied through accepting the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse, the nodal point will consequently be secure. Whatever a discourse that is facing a crisis, could make more subjects regarding to signifiers that has been highlighted during crisis, it consequently become more successful in passing through this crisis. These subjects can objectively agree with the grounds of the crisis, but their identity has been formed according to the preferred meanings of a discourse that they may consciously oppose, and therefore this crisis would not lead to the collapse of the hegemonic discourse. It is worth mentioning that these signifiers and the preferring meanings relating to them are beneficial for the hegemonic discourse alongside the act of repression during a crisis that is being faced.

The IRdisc in facing a crisis that has questioned the legitimacy of its articulation, has applied a second strategy that is to say, firstly, it represses the active forces that were attempting to deconstruct the central signifiers of the IRdisc, like supreme leadership, Islamism and sovereignty, and redefining signifiers, like social justice, freedom, independence and equality, according to the republican face of the IRdisc and the aim of the sovereignty of the people; as has been noted in the charter of the Green Movement (Mohammadpour, 2012). These forces were reformist activists and many of them were sentenced to prison and banned from undertaking any political activity, either for life or for a long time. Besides that, streets protests were suppressed and many ordinary people were arrested because of their participation in demonstrations, or for their activities in cyberspace in favour of the Green Movement.

Besides this repression, as Gramsci argued, being hegemonic is a combination of utilising repressive forces and achieving satisfaction among subjects. Considering that a hegemonic discourse, in facing a crisis, is trying to secure its nodal point by preferring its desired meanings relating to signifiers that can secure the nodal point from being deconstructed. So, one of my concerns is to explain which signifiers were more significant for the IRdisc and what meanings have been preferred in relation to them, since this discourse has highlighted them during the facing of the dislocation. Understanding the mentioned relation leads to an exploration of the desired subjectivity and its characteristics for the IRdisc.

In order to explore this subjectivity and its characteristics, it seems necessary to address the way that discourses are creating and forming their subjects. In other words, the mechanisms or processes from which discourses are taking benefits so as to construct their desired subjectivity among people. It seems impossible to explore this subjectivity and the discursively preferred meanings except by tracking the processes with which a particular discourse plans to fix its preferred meanings and, accordingly, reach its desired subjects.

THE FORMATION OF SUBJECTS; BY AND THROUGH DISCOURSES

Louis Althusser, a prominent French Marxist intellectual, is one of the theorists that has addressed the domination mechanism and the formation of subjects. From Althusser's point of view, making subjects through the dominant power and the

reproduction of power by the dominant class is done by the mediation of the ideology. Althusser believes that the ideology is the objective matter that lies at the heart of the actions in everyday life. Ideology is a system of ideas, concepts, myths, images, and common sense that forms relations within the societies accordingly (Rojek, 2003, p23). From Althusser's point of view, ideology is not a static collection of the application of beliefs on the suppressed classes by the dominant classes, but it is a dynamic process which is successively reproduced in actions (Althusser, 1971). Here, "In actions" means what people think, behave and understand themselves, and their relation to society (Fisk, 1987, 119). Althusser distinguishes between the ideological state apparatus and the suppressor state apparatus. Suppressor apparatuses include the police, the army, the courts and the prisons. These apparatuses are suppressors because their operation requires elements of violence, obligation and coercion. Althusser argues that the state, in reproducing the current situation of its domination, basically takes advantage of ideological state apparatuses. The main function of ideological apparatuses is to create satisfaction among people so as to encourage them to behave and think in ways accepted by the dominant class (Althusser, 1971, p150). These apparatuses may be religious apparatuses, like churches, educational apparatuses like schools, universities and family institutions, legal apparatuses, institutions related to political systems -- like parties, commercial unions, or mass media and cultural apparatuses. In his view, the main function of these apparatuses, and also the main goal of an ideological system, is the "interpellation" of individuals and subjects in relation to the continuity and reproduction of the existing social order.

Althusser has defined Interpellation as a mechanism during which the ideology calls subjects and gives them individuality. Because of the interpellation mechanism, individuals become the subjects in the ideology (Althusser, 1971, p170).

Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round -- [...] he becomes a subject. (Althusser, 1971, p174)

During the process of interpellation by ideologies, individuals are placed in specific positions through being called and individualised. These positions are predetermined, and ideologies identify subjects by placing them in different positions. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p41) believe that, in discourse analysis's view, we can say that with interpellation "subjects become positions in discourses."

Like Althusser, Laclau and Mouffe also believe that subjects are subject to interpellation, not with ideologies, but, rather, by discourses. In order to understand the process of subjectification, we must therefore study the subject positions that have been represented according to the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse, or of each discourse that can interpellate subjects (Laclau, 1977, p100). The difference between Althusser's and Laclau and Mouffe's viewpoint on subjectivity and the conditions of interpellation is based on their different theoretical approaches to the notion of ideology. Laclau and Mouffe study subjectivity and ideology through a poststructuralist approach, meanwhile, Althusser contemplates these issues from a structuralist point of view.

Marxism has addressed the notion of ideology more than other intellectual attitudes. This approach sees two main features of the ideology. First, it describes ideology as a superstructure, and that all social relations and rituals are defined according to, and by, it. Second, Structuralist Marxists see ideology as a false consciousness of social conditions and even subjectivity (Laclau, 1990, 89). In this view, the conditions and rules of this superstructure are defined and determined by the base of economy. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) have classified the differences between the poststructuralist approach of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis and the approach of traditional structuralism/Marxism in two points. Firstly, Laclau and Mouffe deny the difference between the base and the superstructure. They believe that all kinds of social formations, even those we take for granted, like the base in traditional Marxism, are the results of discursive processes. Secondly, they dismiss Marxism's conception of society. In traditional Marxism, society exists as an object. In their view, being objective means the fixation of a structure into a discursive process. Discourses try to present objective conditions by the articulation of their intended signs, and they attempt to fix their preferred meanings. Namely, they are trying to fix all their preferred meanings, relating to all signs and signifiers, so as to be able to present the

product of their discursive articulations as objective matters. Objectivity is possible when all meanings are fixed in a discursive articulation (Laclau, 1990, pp89-92). As I have mentioned before, Laclau and Mouffe believe that closure in discursive articulations is impossible; consequently constant objectivity is also impossible. The permanent meaning fixing of all signs is impossible, and all meanings are disposable to deconstruction and, rationally, signifiers can gain different meanings in different areas and places. Laclau and Mouffe thus believe that there is no predetermined reality according to which we can conclude on the truth or falsity of statements (Howarth, 2000, p5). It is worth mentioning that the nonexistence of reality in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory doesn't mean the material lack of the existence of things and of the outer world, but they believe that they will get meaning by being placed in discursive articulations. Without the existence of discourses, things are meaningless. All post-structural intellectuals, like Foucault, criticise the traditional Marxist notion of ideology. Structuralist/Marxists believe that the ideology is based on truth and falsity. This means that there is a predetermined reality which ideology, by referring to this reality, used to evaluate statements as being true or false, or it distinguishes subjects' consciousness to be true or false (Smith, 1998, p59). However, from a discursive perspective, the reality is constructed by discourses and consequently it is changeable. It is impossible to find a predetermined coherent entity by referral to which, the truth or falsity of statements becomes obvious, unless that reality has been constructed by a discourse. Hence, the other aim of discourse analysis can be the investigation of discursive articulations which construct different kinds of reality that are taken for granted by subjects. This effort by discourse analysis stands against the discovery of the objective reality of society in Structuralist approaches. Laclau believes that what has been called ideology in a discursive articulation process, is, in fact, the desire of that discourse to be pervasive (1990, p92). The concept of ideology, in Laclau and Mouffe's standpoint, is similar to the notion of myth.

Dominant hegemonic discourses are always facing social crises, which may threaten their hegemony. These crises may cause the dislocation of hegemonic meanings and demonstrate the hegemonic articulation to be weak and to incapacitate articulation in resolving social problems. A hegemonic discourse therefore needs to have its subject's minds under control. In crisis circumstances, the subjects of the hegemonic discourse

are seeking a solution to social problems. This seeking brings with it the possibility for subjects to accept the meanings of alternative discourses, which offering a solution to crises and problems. Subsequently, the hegemonic discourse needs to offer an ideal image of the objective circumstances of the society if it is to seize the minds of its subjects. This ideal image must embody situations where all of the social problems have been solved, and no crisis remains in the social realm and no contradiction exists in the subjects' minds. Laclau and Mouffe know this offering of an ideal image of society as "myth".

By myth we mean a space of representation, which bears no relation of continuity with the dominant 'structural objectivity'. Myth is thus a principle of the reading of a given situation, whose terms are external to what is representable in the objective spatiality constituted by the given structure.
(Laclau, 1990, p61)

Myths are the products of the dislocations of dominant discourses. They are offered by discourses regarding the creation of a new social objectivity to overcome dislocations. Myths, according to the context and discourses that support and offer them, represent the desires of a particular social group or class. Nonetheless, this is not enough for myths and discourses to be hegemonic. Myths have to transform "social imagination" to become pervasive and hegemonic (Laclau, 1990, p62). Social imaginations and myths are communal, and they represent different parts of societies. In acts, a social imagination is the ideal image created by a myth, which has become comprehensively generalised among different groups and classes in a society (Maffesoli, 1996, p146). Actually, in Laclau's point of view, ideology is a myth that occurs according to the demand of each discourse to be total (Laclau, 1990). Discourses construct ideologies to overcome the deconstruction of their signifier's meanings. Discourses present an ideal imaginary image with metaphoric aspects to create a social imagination. In discourses, ideology and myth seek to represent society as a coherent entity, which has been based on preferred discursive meanings through the articulation process. When social agencies identify themselves according to this represented entity, then they will not question the hegemony of the discourse.

We can therefore conclude that what interpellate subjects are discourses, not ideologies. Discourses create and provide the subject's positions for individuals (Howarth, 2000, p13). Laclau and Mouffe have used the concept of interpellation, suggested by Althusser, to form their theory when they speak about subject positions in discourses. Nevertheless, they have registered this notion as part of their poststructuralist approach. Obviously, in their perception of this concept, hegemonic discourses are more determinant of positions for subjects and controlling of patterns of social actions.

Since Laclau and Mouffe argue that anything outside discourses is anonymous and unrecognisable, subjects are also not exceptions, and the identities of subjects are being determined by discourses, not by the subjects themselves. The perception of a subject by itself, and even by the world, is based on subject positions that have been determined by different discourses (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p184). This perception of self is the basis of the social acts of each subject.

By referring to Lacan, Laclau and Mouffe argue that subjects are essentially "fragmented" or "decentred" (Laclau and Zakc, 1994, p31). This means that subjects are successively attempting to perceive themselves completely through identification processes and to reach a comprehensive identity. From Lacan's point of view, these attempts by subjects to have a complete identity and to perceive themselves to be a whole, would be incomplete attempts since considering the demand of a subject to transform into a whole, which has a total identity, the subject finds itself not to be coincident with its present position and identity, and it consequently tries to find the total identity in other subjects' positions in other discourses (Lacan, 1977, Laclau and Zac, 1994). A discourse is therefore hegemonic, being able to satisfy its subjects more through accepting its constructed reality and truth according to its preferred meanings and ideal subject positions. If subjects have the assumption of the truth of a particular discourse, these subjects are going to identify themselves less according to subject positions in other discourses.

Nevertheless, the important question in considering the forming of subjects and interpellation is: how do discourses interpellate subjects? Namely, what mechanisms are defined by discourses through which individuals can be placed in subject positions and identify themselves according to the constructed meanings of a discourse? How

do individuals find subject positions, and how do these positions become clear for them?

Laclau and Mouffe believe that the “representation” of subject positions by discourses will cause the identification of subjects by the represented subject position (1985, p76 and Laclau, 1993, p289). Individuals or groups in societies understand their individual or collective identities when subject positions are being represented. Individual or collective identities are formed either by accepting or denying the positions represented.

Hall (1997) sees representation as part of cultural circulation, which rises alongside the elements of production, consumption, identity and rules. He argues that representation is relating meanings to the culture and common sense (Hall, 1997). Hall, by using a Foucauldian point of view in relation to the notion of discourse, elaborates that the representation contains constructive features. According to the principle of discourse analysis that indicates that signifiers do not have any self-sufficient meaning, Hall argues, through the intermediation of representation systems of signs and concepts, and meanings are constructed for signifiers.

Hall (1997) creates the term “systems of representation”, within which he indicates two levels. The first one tells us about a system that contains all kinds of issues, individuals and events. With the intermediation of the collection that Hall named ‘mental representation’; individuals organise and classify different kinds and forms of notions, things, concepts and events. With this system of classification, people can distinguish different things and notions. At the second, and higher, level, people share notions that they could distinguish at the previous level. They share notions together, and common cultural meanings are constructed through this sharing in order to interpret the world. People need to express and exchange meanings and concepts. Without this common meaning, understanding other people would be impossible. People always share their mental representation of concepts and meanings (Hall, 1997, p18).

Nonetheless, to extend and develop the idea of representation, it is crucial to search for an idea which elaborates representation processes as sources for the production of social knowledge, an idea that is related to social acts and the issue of power. This point, for Hall, is considered to be the main point in elaborating a method of meta-

textual analysis. This idea thus constructs subjects, and it also relates the object of representation to the more widespread realm of knowledge and power. Hall utilises the Foucauldian approach to the notion of discourse in order to reach this aim. As I have argued in the “Notion of Discourse” section of this chapter, Foucault believes that the meanings and meaningful forms of relations are constructed in discourses; thus, each study of representation, under the influence of Foucault’s theory of discourse, seeks for processes that construct meanings.

One of Foucault’s key concepts in considering the relationship between knowledge and power is the concept of the “institutional apparatus”. Institutional apparatus, in Foucault’s thought, refers to the background relations of knowledge, discourse and power. Institutions and social constructions have the ability to control different aspects of representations. These institutions and constructions are sites for the emergence of representations in different forms of signs, symbols and artistic styles. Institutions own these styles and symbols and use them due to their interests (Hall, 1997, p47). In considering these institutions, the most important issue is to discover the relationships of these institutions to ideas of a particular discourse, which is dominant.

In fact, discourses represent subject positions with facilities that they own. The function of representation is the same as the function of interpellation. Discourses try to bring identity to their subjects in relation to their articulated, preferred meanings by representing subject positions and calling people to interpellate them according to these positions. It is worth mentioning that these positions could also be represented in order to make “the others” of discourses accept the logic of difference in a discourse. All of the represented subject positions are not desirable positions in discourses, but their representation has functions in either continuity or in reaching the hegemony of discourses. In the chapter on Methodology, I will discuss different representational strategies and their functions in subjects’ interpellation for discourses.

So considering my project, it seems crucial to understand under what discourse the representation of subjects’ positions and the preferred meanings of Iranian TV series are forming, and to which signifiers these preferred meanings have been articulated. A grasp of this discourse helps us to reach a proper understanding about both the

represented subject's positions and the positions that individuals can take up regarding what has been represented. Nonetheless, the main question in regard to this issue is: How are discourses representing subject positions, in order to interpellate subjects?

Media, Interpellation and Discourse Analysis

As previously mentioned, Althusser believed that the ideological state apparatuses are doing the interpellation of subjects. Althusser knows mass media and cultural apparatuses to be the ideological apparatuses, which aim to interpellate subjects. In Laclau and Mouffe's approach to the notion of ideology, we can recognise the mass media to be tools for the different discourses that aim to interpellate subjects. Regarding the rate of possession of this tool, different discourses are attempting to interpellate subjects through the mediation of mass media. Discourses represent subject positions through the mass media. The mass media is therefore one of these apparatuses which represent subject positions for people in societies. Accordingly, through investigating the mass media we can grasp the articulation of their discourses. Discourses expose themselves and reveal their preferred meanings and their articulations when they represent subject positions. Exploring discursively preferred meanings becomes possible through investigating the attempts of discourses to make and interpellate subjects according to their preferred meanings. Hence, considering the presumed role of the mass media in subjects' interpellation, by investigating particular media productions, we can discover the process of a particular discursive articulation. In this research I therefore intend to analyse the IRdisc when this discourse exposes its articulation in media productions.

Television is one of the most important kinds of mass media, which broadcasts programs that are full of meanings with particular ideas and values and *"that perform[s] the work of the dominant ideology"* (Fisk, 1987, p1). This medium attempts to interpellate subjects by representing ideal subjects' positions. As Fisk (1987) argues: *"Television is able to construct a subject position for us ... Television tries to construct an ideal subject position which invites us to occupy, and if we do, rewards us with the ideological pleasure ..."* (Fisk, 1987, p51)

Television, in relation to its discursive articulation and hegemonic conditions, tries either to dislocate the hegemonic meanings of dominant discourse or to naturalise its hegemonic discourse and preferred meanings.

The aim of studying television in this research is to find the preferred meanings of Iranian State Television's discourse. Iranian state television is the medium of the IRdisc and, as I will discuss in chapter three, the preferred meanings of this media and subject positions represented in this media are the same as the preferred meanings in the IRdisc. This means that television discourse, in the case of Iranian state television, which is operated under the direct supervision of the supreme leader, totally works in the interests of the IRdisc and does not even question a single preferred meaning of this discourse. Rather, it attempts to represent subject positions and preferred meanings that, accordingly, can make subjects for the IRdisc.

Torring (1999) believes that by considering the discourse analysis of media, we can choose one of three strategies. Firstly, looking at discourses about mass media. This viewpoint considers the functions of media in societies. The main question of this approach will be: what is the role of the media in the production and reproduction of social order? The second approach will look at the discourse of the mass media. The main question in this approach will be about forms and content, which are produced and presented by mass media. The main method of this approach will be through quantitative methods in content analysis. Although studying questions raised by the first two approaches is important, Torring (1999) believes that the best approach in discourse analysing mass media is the third approach, which looks at mass media as discourse. This approach, which is a Cultural Studies approach, suggests when we consider mass media as tools for discourses to interpellate subjects, it doesn't mean that we can separate media and the discourse that the media present. Rather, we have to consider mass media as discourse. In analysing mass media as a discourse we can investigate its discursive articulation and preferred meanings.

Fairclough (1995) in a discourse analysis approach to mass media argues that media discourse should be analysed at three levels. The first level is the micro-level. At this level, mass media products are considered as texts, which try to articulate a particular discourse. Discourse analysis at this level aims to clarify the preferred meanings of media discourse and to discover the processes and the ways they are articulated. The

preferred meanings of discursive articulation will be found through mass media productions. The second level is the meso-level. At this level, the study of institutional forms of mass media productions is important as discursive practices. Analysis at this level will clarify what kind of discursive articulation flows in texts that are produced by the mass media. The third level is the macro-level. At this level, the mass media are considered in relation to their ownership forms and political regulations as social practices.⁸

In this research I intend to offer a discourse analysis of Iranian State Television as a discourse through applying the conceptual framework of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis. The emphasis of this research will mostly be on the micro-level of mass media discourse analysis. After a brief contribution relating to the meso- and macro level (institutional and ownership analysis of Iranian State Television), in order to argue that Iranian state television discourse totally supports the ideas of the IRdisc; I will undertake discourse analysis of Iranian State Television at the micro-level (the texts produced). This means that I will analyse the representation of the subject positions in Iranian State Television in order to explore the preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the IRdisc.

It is worth mentioning here that my concern in this research is not to study perceptions of the Tehranian middle class from television texts, rather, after exploring what the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc are, I will examine if the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class has been formed in a way that is consistent with these ideals and ideas, or not. To achieve this aim, I interviewed members of the Tehranian middle class in relation to the themes that were evident from what I have explored in the TV texts, not by the theme of the TV texts.

The interviewees are therefore not necessarily members of the audiences of state television texts, but I have examined whether the preferred meanings of Iranian state television in particular texts, as the preferred meanings of the IRdisc, can be

⁸ Arguably, I see suggested division between micro, meso and macro levels by Fairclough, not in contrary with my approach in dividing text discourses, structural discourses of producing texts and ownership discourses of producing texts.

considered to be meanings that construct subjectivities of members of the Tehranian middle class or not.

I decided on not doing audience analysis for two reasons: firstly, I didn't want to limit my sample to just the audiences of Iranian state television since I considered the possibility of the construction of middle class subjectivity according to different forms of interpellation by the IRdisc through other ideological state apparatuses. I only therefore considered TV texts and Iranian television's discourse as a sample that reveals this interpellation and articulation of the IRdisc. Secondly, referring to TV texts might cause some kind of presumptions in the interviewees that could lead them to consciously embrace a position against the IRdisc and the notions that it puts forward. Since, as argued, it is possible that a subject, stands against a discourse, politically and ideologically, but significant parts of his/her identity are still formed in a way that is consistent with the preferred meanings of that discourse, I never referred to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and the TV texts in interviews, in order to avoid making any presumptions. Specifically, at the time when I have conducted the interviews, there was a kind of general pessimism about the state in the Islamic Republic among the Tehranian middle class, because of the repression of the Green Movement by this state.

In the next chapter, through presenting a review of the development of Iranian state television's discourse since the revolution of 1979, I will elaborate on why, in this research, I have considered Iranian state television discourse as a formation that demonstrates and manifests the ideal subject positions and preferred meanings of the IRdisc.

CHAPTER THREE: EVOLUTION OF THE IRANIAN STATE TELEVISION DISCOURSE IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY IRAN

Political and media discourses in Iran were fully transformed in 1979. The revolution not only changed the political discourse of the country and eliminated the hegemony of the *Pahlavi* monarchy, but also caused a significant transformation in all of the cultural patterns in Iranian society. Here, I do not want to consider the 1979 revolution and its effects in relation to changing the cultural patterns of Iranian society, but I will analyse how the television discourse was changed during and after the 1979 revolution. The study of this transformation is important, since television discourse in Iran, and basically all forms of state media production, still consider themselves to be the extenders and propagators of the revolution, which occurred in February 1979.

This research examines whether the subjectivities of members of the Tehranian middle class have been constructed to be consistent with the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc, which has been represented in most of the popular TV series in Iranian state television since the Iranian presidential election of 2009. This research supposes that in studying Iranian state television's discourse, this discourse promotes the ideas of the IRdisc and interpellate subjects regarding preferred meanings of this discourse.

In this research the preferred meanings of the IRdisc will therefore be explored in relation to the products of Iranian state television. As discussed before, I will analyse the three most popular TV series on Iranian state television from Summer 2009, to Winter 2013, in order to understand what the preferred meanings of the IRdisc were and according to which signifiers these meanings were preferred. Therefore, analyses of these TV series will be done at the micro level. Nonetheless in order to elaborate that the represented subject positions and preferred meanings of the Iranian state television discourse are consistent with ideals of the IRdisc, it is a need to consider the formation and evolution of the state television discourse in its institutional forms (meso-level) and ownership forms (macro-level). Therefore, during this chapter, I intend to elaborate that during different contextual circumstances passed from the revolution of 1979, and during domination of different articulations of the IRdisc, the Iranian state television discourse has always represented and projected ideas of the

IRdisc in order to form subjectivities that are desired by this discourse. Moreover, as it discussed during the theoretical chapter, regarding a split that emerged among active forces of the state in the consequence of emergence of the reformist articulation, during this chapter I will elaborate that how the Iranian television discourse stood in the side of the principlist articulation. This will justify my approach when currently I call the principlist articulation as the dominant articulation of the IRdisc and intend to reach preferred meanings of this articulation through representations of the state television.

Grasping different articulations of the Iranian state television discourse from the beginning, and considering its preferred meanings at different periods, is a requisite for arguing that this discourse has always interpolated subjects regarding preferred meanings of the dominant articulation of the IRdisc. To reach this aim, in this section, I will study the discourse of Iranian television in four epochs and will discuss how, during those years, the discourse of Iranian state television was formed and established according to the dominant articulations of the IRdisc.

Moreover, as Torfing (1999) suggested, I will look at the Iranian state television which definitely can be considered as mass media as a discursive formation, since it is impossible to separate media from the discourse that media presents. Therefore, the main argument of this chapter would be that articulation of the Iranian state television discourse has been done consistent and coordinated with the articulation of the IRdisc and it is possible to investigate preferred meanings of the IRdisc through studying representations of the Iranian state television discourse. It is worth mentioning that this contribution to the mass media does not stand against considering media as ideological state apparatuses, since these apparatuses also are forming and articulating discourses that interpellate subjects. Therefor again we cannot separate ideological apparatuses from the discourse that they present. Arguably ideological state apparatuses are discourses that have been articulated regarding meanings that have been preferred in regard to discursive practices in their institutional and ownership forms, namely macro and meso levels.

During this chapter I will mostly present a narration of formation, establishment and articulation of the Iranian state television discourse in its institutional and ownership forms. During this chapter, I will also refer to TV texts as evidence for different

articulations of the television discourse consistent with different articulations of the IRdisc.

In addition, as the main concern and core question of the school of Cultural Studies in doing media research is to demonstrate a powerful link between culture and politics, understanding politics of the Iranian television discourse in macro and meso level, will lead to a better grasp of the intention of this discourse in micro level regarding relating to particular signifiers to specific signified in order to interpellate subjects. Therefore, I believe that the political nature of discursive articulation of TV texts in their micro level, is tightly dependent on discursive practices in macro and meso levels.

THE FORMATION PERIOD OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN'S TELEVISION DISCOURSE: FROM 1979 TO 1981

In early February, 1979, after the return of Ayatollah Khomeini to Iran following 15 years of exile, the representative of the NIRT's (National Iranian Radio and Television, the name of the organisation before the revolution) strikers, who went on strike from November, 1978, asked his opinion about the role of television in society. Khomeini responded: *"My opinion about television is that it has to be in the service of the people, and governments do not have any right to supervise this apparatus. Hitherto the Iranian government and the former Shah have behaved against international rules."* (Rashidi, Jam-jam Newspaper, 1st February 2009) This speech caused the strike of NIRT employees to continue until 11th February 1979, the day of the Iranian revolution's victory.

On 12th February 1979, *Mehdi Bazargan*, the Prime Minister of the provisional government, through a decree appointed *Sadegh Ghotbzadeh* as the President of the NIRT. After the day of revolution, the name of the National Iranian Radio and Television organisation (NIRT) changed to Voice and Vision of the Revolution. Voice and Vision of the Revolution at 8:30 on 12th February 1979, broadcast a news section without any censorship and with total neutrality. The designation of *Ghotbzadeh* as the President of the Voice and Vision of the Revolution organisation, which was later renamed as the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran (VVIR), was the beginning of a different articulation of television discourse in Iran. The preferred meanings of the previous television discourse were deconstructed and the new

discourse needed to bring a new kind of articulation to its preferred meanings. This articulation should have been formed around a new nodal point, rather than around modernisation, westernisation or Americanisation, as in the Pahlavi era (Abrahamian, 2008, p245). This new nodal point was Islamism. The discursive articulation of state television after the revolution thus had to be formed in a new way. This discourse had to create a new myth and, by making this myth into the social imagination, could become the hegemonic discourse. Attempts to bring a new form of articulation to television discourse according to the new nodal point, therefore started a day after the revolution. These attempts eventually led to the establishment of the Islamic television discourse.

One of the proceedings of the Voice and Vision of the Revolution organisation in the early days after the victory of the revolution was reading the statements and declarations of all the political groups and parties' (which had played a role in the victory of the revolution). These groups contained left-leaning parties, like "*Mujahidin*", to the neo-liberal right-leaning parties, like "*Nehzat Azadi*". Declarations by these groups were provided to radio and television, demonstrated their political positions after the victory of the revolution. These declarations were presented to both radio and television with the condition that there would be no censorship of the broadcasting. One of the first actions by *Ghotbzadeh* after he took on the presidency of the radio and television organisation was to interrupt the broadcasting of these declarations. In an interview, he stated: "*in the early days [after the victory of revolution] we read the declarations of all groups. Now, we decided that from today, [14th February, 1979] not to read the declaration of any group, whether it is "Nehzat Azadi" or "Jebhe-ye Melli", or other different groups*" (Iranian History, 19th February, 2011).

Ghotbzadeh was describing his plans for the radio and television organisation as being the expression of the voices of the "barefoot people" (*Paberahne ha*). He believed that broadcasting the programs of this organisation must represent the ideological voice of the revolution, which was totally and wholly Islamic. He also believed that the demands of the society after the revolution must be determined by the leader of revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, and nobody else. He also stated that the radio and television organisation is not a laboratory for the ideological expression of different

political and doctrinal groups and believers in ideologies other than Islam, can express their beliefs through other media like the press (the press was not yet subject to governmental censorship at that time). *Ghotbzadeh* believed that the predominant amounts of Iranian society are practising Muslims and the religion of Islam plays a major role in Iranian society. He therefore prevented the influence of other groups, which did not have any religious concerns but had played roles in the victory of the revolution. *Ghotbzadeh* ordered that instead of news of these groups, and generally of political groups and parties, the messages of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the problems of the provisional government should be broadcast (Interview with *Kayhan* Newspaper, 17th February, 1979).

These statements by *Ghotbzadeh* and his operations in the radio and television organisation caused protests from some political groups against him. Additionally, some of the press also started to critique the operations of *Ghotbzadeh* in the radio and television organisation. The *Ayandegan* newspaper, in critiquing the double standard of behaviour by *Ghotbzadeh*, published an article entitled: *"Censorship in different forms in radio and television"*. This article stated: *"we should see why the employees of radio and television went on strike and now, when their strike has finished, what they have achieved? The aim of the strike of radio and television employees, as various statements by employees' union demonstrate, was, in the first place, the demand for the neutrality of radio and television and the ending of, "every governmental" supervision. However, in recent days it has been proven that not only have radio and television employees not reached their aim, rather, in fact, nothing has changed"* (*Ayandegan* Newspaper, Cited in Iranian History, 19th February, 2012).

Ghotbzadeh's remarks, and his actions in the Voice and Vision of the Revolution organisation in the early days of the revolution, demonstrate well that the new discursive articulation in television had started to form. This articulation sought to use all discursive facilities to attach new meanings to floating signifiers. These floating signifiers were mostly moments in the previous television discourse, and some of them had recently entered into the field of discursivity of the new articulation. From the first days after the victory of the revolution, the television discourse, by adopting the nodal point of Islamism, signified by the supreme leadership, as *Ghotbzadeh* declared, started to articulate its preferred meanings. In this process, the television discourse

began to marginalise voices and discourses, which their nodal points had not determined to be Islamic after the revolution.

Ayatollah Khomeini, in his first speech after returning to Iran, in referring to cultural institutes like cinema and television, said:

We are not opposed to the cinema, to radio, or to television; what we oppose is vice and the use of the media to keep our young people in a state of backwardness and dissipating their energy. We have never opposed these features of modernity in themselves, but when they were brought from Europe to the East, particularly to Iran, unfortunately, they were used not in order to advance civilisation, but in order to drag us into barbarism” (Khomeini, cited in Algar, 1981: 258)

This means that the signifiers of the previous television discourse during the *Pahlavi* monarchy were carrying the meaning of corruption with their signifieds. These signifiers must therefore leave the field of discursivity of the current television discourse and must be replaced with new signifiers. These new signifiers have to carry meanings that are consistent, with Islam as the nodal point.

Khomeini emphasised that if television was not entirely Islamised; Islam would not have succeeded in Iran (*Sahifah’i Nur*, Vol. 12, p84). He believed that television is as important to revolutionaries as it was important to Pahlavi regime (*Sahifah’i Nur*, Vol.5, p 203), because television is the most powerful and efficient apparatus, since it reaches the entire country (*Sahifah’i Nur*, Vol.8, p201). He believed that if it (television) was purified, the entire country would be purified; otherwise society would be deflected (*Sahifah’i Nur*, Vol. 16, p82). Khomeini, in the first month after the victory of the revolution, and following objections from different political groups about the operation of radio and television organisations, during a visit with members of the provisional government said:

These apparatuses –when serving Taghut (rebellion against Allah in Quranic terms, here it means the Shah’s era) - whether they were empowering Taghut or distancing people from important issues... It was very important for them to widely blind the eyes of people, to increase their unawareness in order to pillage them. Now, when –thanks to Allah- this apparatus is Islamic, it should fulfil its Islamic duties...Those who were formerly serving Taghut and doing all kinds of corruption, should be cleansed. Now, any expression of piety and belief in Islam

is not acceptable from those who were formerly delivering speeches, or exhibiting, or doing anything against the revolution. They should all be cleansed. Radio and Television are important in the propaganda of both the corrupt and the correct. The importance of television is more than any other media. These apparatuses are nurturing systems. All strata of the nation should be nurtured. Television is a public university. This must be an apparatus which ... nurtures all [people] as fighters and thinkers; nurtures them as independent and tolerant, and distances them from westoxification. (Sahifah'i Nur, Vol. 6, P 399)

After this speech by Khomeini, and determining the duties of the television apparatus in creating an Islamic and revolutionary television discourse, *Ghotbzadeh* started to clean up (*Paksazi*) the radio and television organisation. He fired and eliminated lots of the employees of this organisation, who had been working in this organisation in the *Pahlavi* monarchy era. In his opinion, this action and widespread elimination determined the border between the revolutionaries and the non- revolutionaries. Lots of the fired employees were employees who went on strike before the revolution, and in the last three months of the *Pahlavi* monarchy they did not go to their work at the NIRT. Nonetheless, *Ghotbzadeh*, in response to objections by fired employees, said: *"the strike does not determine the border between revolutionaries and non-revolutionaries"* (Iranian History, 1st February, 2012).

Nevertheless, the process of the formation of the new television discourse regarding the Islamic preferred meanings was obviously acceptable to the leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini. He believed that television employees should be purified, and need to be responsible to, and believe in, Islam, and also in the Islamic republic (*Sahifah'i Nur*, Vol.10, p12). Actions regarding having an Islamic television discourse followed two major ideas. Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994, pp170-1) believed that these two major Ideas were, firstly, presenting "pure Islam" (*Eslam-e Rastin*) and, secondly, avoiding western and eastern culture and their influences, under the slogan: "neither west, nor east" (*na sharghi, na gharbi*). The emphasis on these two values intensified after the referendum on 1st April, 1979. Through this referendum, the Islamic Republic was selected as the political system of Iran. For instance, one of the signs of this intensification was the mandatory *hijab* for women who worked at radio and television organisation. The mandatory *hijab* on the radio and television organisation occurred before the *hijab* was obligatory for women

in all public places. Following 1st April referendum and the election of the Islamic republic as the political system, the radio and television organisation was renamed as the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran (VVIR).

After this renaming and the referendum, obviously the content of VVIR programs became more Islamic and more religious. In referring to the two values mentioned above, pure Islam, and neither East nor West, we can divide the content of the broadcasting programs of those days into two sections. The content of the first section sought to articulate the preferred meanings of the dominant discourse after the revolution and the referendum to make sense of pure Islam. The contents of programs that related to the second section were trying to reject, deconstruct and dislocate the meanings, which were articulated in the *Pahlavi* era by articulating anti-imperialist meanings.

Iranian State Television According to the Constitution

Article 175 of the Iranian Constitution, which was approved on 29th December, 1980, refers to the rules of VVIR operation and the duties of this organisation. According to this law, VVIR is an independent organisation, which must be operated under the joint supervision of three representatives from the judicial system, government and parliament, and the head of the organisation is to be determined by the supreme leader. This paragraph of the statutes of VVIR changed on 5th May, 1991, and afterwards representatives from the judicial system, government and parliament only have a regulatory duty at VVIR and the president in charge of the operation of VVIR will be chosen or dismissed, merely by the direct decision of the supreme leader.

Nonetheless, other paragraphs in this article have not changed since the first approval. According to paragraph 9 of this statute, and under the part about the duties of the VVIR, it was indicated that the major aim of this organisation, as a public university, must be to spread Islamic culture among the whole society. This organisation also has to try its best to create a situation for the refinement of human souls and the promotion of Islamic morality. According to this law, the VVIR organisation also has to accelerate the movement that began with the Islamic revolution, so that it is widespread worldwide. In paragraph 11 of this law, indicates that this organisation should try to expand the international relationship between the Islamic Republic of

Iran and other countries that conform to Islamic criteria, through producing beneficial programs and offering them worldwide. According to paragraph 7 of this law also, the right to the establishment of transmitters and the broadcasting of television and radio programs anywhere in the country is under the monopoly of this organisation. If natural or legal persons proceed to benefit by establishing any televisual or radio transmitter, the authorities of the Islamic Republic will prevent them from continuing, and they will be prosecuted (Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution, Article 175).

THE STABILISATION PERIOD OF THE TELEVISION DISCOURSE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: FROM 1981 TO 1989

1981 was the beginning year of the sixties-decade (1360s) according to the Jalali calendar⁹, the official calendar of Iran. This decade can definitely be cited as the years in which the IRdisc fixed its preferred meanings in all of its social, political and cultural aspects. The dominant articulation of the IRdisc during this decade is the “Islamic-Leftist” articulation. The sixties-decade began with the start of the war between Iran and Iraq, and finished with the death of the charismatic leader of the 1979 revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini. Thinking about the 60s, and discussing the legacy that this decade has left for Iranians today, is a struggle, which is still on-going among the different forces involved in today’s Iranian situation. Attempts to seize the meanings of signifiers, which were formed in the 60s, indicate that those signifiers, and the possible meanings of them, are still significant and their re-articulation by conflicting discursive forces will affect today’s situation. Marginalised groups and forces during the 60s, and the dominant one, still disagree widely about the legacy of the 60s decade. Even struggles about meanings, which were articulated during the 60s, are still really significant among the groups and persons who were dominant during the 60s and are now marginalised. These struggles determine the importance of the sixties-decade in current discursive encounters. The ideological stability of the IRdisc was formed and achieved in this decade. The most proper way to deconstruct the current preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding specific signifiers, is to go back to the historical moment of their articulation. The sixties-decade was when the IRdisc, with its usage of

⁹ In all of the chapters of this research, I will refer to the years between 1981 and 1989 as the 60s or the sixties-decade, according to the Jalali calendar.

different elements of satisfaction and suppression, could make its ideology (myth) hegemonic and could marginalise rival discourses.

Undoubtedly, in contemporary Iranian history, this decade has the largest number of sacrifices. Sacrifices in this decade were from the two ends of the spectrum. At the one end, subjects were placed so that the discourse of the Islamic Republic was at the highest level of hegemony for them, and, at the other end, rivals discourses' subjects were placed where the preferred meanings of the IRdisc were not hegemonic for them at all. The 8-year war between Iran and Iraq required sacrifices from groups near the first end, and the suppression of the dominant discourse with the usage of suppressive elements, required sacrifices from groups near to the second end of the spectrum.

Arguably, one of the most important sixties-decade's elements is television, and its programs in the 60s.

Television in those days, as the ideological state apparatus, was experiencing its maximum rate of influence. Television in those days, without having any serious media rival, was articulating its discourse and trying to extend its preferred meanings within Iranian everyday life. The television discourse of the 60s, with the maximum rate of influence and referring to its discursively preferred meanings, was attempting to interpellate subjects. These subjects were recently distanced from the revolutionary crisis, and the previous discursive meanings regarding political and cultural matters, were deconstructed. In this new discourse, and during encounters with this discourse interpellation, subjects needed to find their positions and, accordingly, to identify themselves. Nonetheless, the sixties-decade's circumstances, considering the beginnings of the war between Iraq and Iran in September, 1980, and also the beginning the wide making of "the others" by the IRdisc, mostly did not let subjects identify themselves according to different and various discourses. This means that the subjectivities of discursive subjects of those years were less fragmented, since they were not exposed to the interpellation of many discourses. Discourses of Ideological state apparatuses for the interpellation of subjects were mostly unique for all subjects. All of those people with the least opportunities in society had to use the same facilities. For example, schools were mostly public schools, and even the few existent private schools were running under the close supervision of the government.

Universities were only public universities under the supervision of a governmental section.

In considering the mass media situation in the 60s, the governmental supervision on the press spread. Some newspapers, which were critics of the Islamic Republic's policies, were closed down by the government, like *Ayandegan*. The monopoly of radio and television was also in the hands of the state by law. All these factors indicate that the subjects of the IRdisc could not easily identify themselves according to other discourses other than that of the Islamic Republic and, as a result; their identities were not so fragmented. On the other hand, if some subjects were identifying themselves according to alternative discourses, the suppressing apparatuses of the Islamic Republic were smashing them strongly, and they were represented as "the others". The myth of Islam was promoted in all of the social aspects as the social imagination and true way to emancipation (Varzi, 2006, p107).

In the process of Islamising the whole Iranian society and making the IRdisc the hegemonic discourse, from the perspective of the Ayatollah Khomeini the television was the most important apparatus in promoting the preferred meanings of the IRdisc:

Of course, we should begin to think of how this apparatus –which might be the most important apparatus in our propaganda- could be Islamic both in Radio and Television. It means that any step there, must be endeavoured to be a step towards Islam, then their work is a service to the god...We are obligated to do everything according to the aims of the Islamic Republic, which are the same aims as Islam. (Sahifah'i Nur, Volume 6)

This was a part of Khomeini's speech on 2nd August, 1982, for the CEO of VVIR and his assistant directors in the different parts of this organisation. The management of VVIR during the sixties-decade did not change much. In the early years of the 60s, namely 1982, Ayatollah Khomeini appointed *Mohammad Hashemi* to be the president of VVIR. The VVIR organisation became relatively stable in its directorial department after *Ghotbzadeh* and this organisation became consistent with other governmental parts of the Islamic republican state. *Mohammad Hashemi* was the brother of *Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani*, the President of the parliament and one of the central members of the revolutionary committee.

By the beginning of the 60s, television discourse had started to interpellate subjects in relation to its preferred meanings. Studying the content of television programs during the 60s, and the effects of these programs on Iranian everyday life, now seems important. Fazeli (2012) believes that three main features of the sixties decade, distinguished this decade from the other years in which the IRdisc sought to articulate its preferred meanings. These three features caused the sixties-decade and its discursive meanings and signifiers still to have special significance, and they can help our understanding of the current circumstances of the IRdisc. These three features are: social cohesion, Ideological excitation, and the richness of meanings during the sixties decade. In continuing this section, I will try to study the position of television discourse in constructing these three features during the sixties-decade.

Television and Social Cohesion in the Sixties-Decade

From different aspects, the sixties-decade indicates an unprecedented social cohesion, which was formed during those years. Three years before the beginning of this decade, a revolution occurred. Official representation of this revolution, after passing through the transition period from the *Pahlavi* discourse to the IRdisc indicates co-ordination between the forces that owned the legacy of the revolution in the years after the revolution. This representation in the official media of the IRdisc showed the solidarity of a nation in resisting despotism and corruption, and the actualisation of some noble values, like independence and freedom. Official representations indicate that reaching these values become possible through the preference of the Islamic Republic's discursive meanings. A year before the start of this decade, the war between Iran and Iraq was begun. This war was started by the Iraqis and official representations in Iran knew this war as the "Sacred Defence" (*Defa'e Moghadas*), or "Imposed War" (*Jang-e Tahmili*). This war was a major factor in the emergence of social cohesion during the sixties-decade. Due to the emergence of this war, lots of social forces, whether the preferred meanings of the IRdisc became hegemonic for them or not, were consistent with a stand against the aggressors in this war. Social forces and individuals, that were taking position against the official representation of this war, were known as "traitors" (*Khaae'nin*) by the social body and they became marginalised and were eliminated. Symbols of social cohesion around this Sacred Defence, like the calls for volunteers to

go to the front, stations for collecting either cash or non-cash aid to help warriors at the front, funerals for the war's martyrs, etc., reproduced the social cohesion around the war. Nonetheless, this social cohesion is possible to understand from other aspects of Iranian everyday life during the sixties decade.

Media consumption, and especially television consumption in the sixties-decade, is one of the features that caused the emergence of social cohesion in that decade. Life in that decade had the same rhythm for a large group. It was not possible to consume media, and especially television, at any time that the people wanted. Television programs started at 5p.m. with the broadcasting of children's programs and ended before midnight. All of the people were consuming the same media, and the media did not split the society. Television during this decade was identified in Iranian homes with two channels. These channels were spending more than half of their broadcasting time, which was a maximum of 10 hours, on information about war events, and on broadcasting war news. Getting news and information about an issue in those days was the most important flow issue in the country, and this was possible through television. This fact helped the emergence of social cohesion around this medium. The only voice that could offer primary news and information about the war was television. Although radio and the press offered information about war issues, television was the most important resource for information about the war (Badii, 2004, pp171-178). This meant that primary news was broadcast through television, news, like the victories or failures of warriors in the front lines. Nonetheless, the most important feature of television, which caused the emergence of social cohesion around it, in addition to its information about the war, was the movement of television discourse to produce various programs, which could attract audiences. This meant that television discourse, after the revolution and by the beginning of the 60s, started to produce programs, which could fill the leisure time of audiences. The most important genre that the television discourse started to produce to attract audiences was the television series genre.

The first TV series after the revolution, which was a production from VVIR, was broadcast in 1981. This TV series was "*Masal Abaad*", and it was directed by *Reza Jiyani*. After this TV series there was "*Sarbadaran*" in 1983 (directed by *Mohammad Ali Najafi*), "*Afasane-ye Soltan va Shaban*", in 1984, (directed by *Daryoush Farhang*), and

"Ayeneh" in 1985, (directed by *Gholamhossein Latifi*), which were broadcast by Iranian state television as the first Iranian series after the revolution. Each of these four TV series, the first TV series produced by VVIR, were pioneers in establishing particular genres. Each of these genres became the main structures of TV series production in later years. These genres, respectively, are: episodic series, historical series, comedy series, and family melodrama series. Groups of series productions, alongside groups of children and juveniles were among the first groups in VVIR, who produced these programmes, which were able to increase the numbers of the television audiences and also the variety in television broadcasting with the aim of entertainment (Shakib, 2012, p229).

In a survey by "Film" monthly magazine (*Mahname-ye Cinamaee-ye Film*), published in March, 2012, about 30 years of TV series production in the Islamic Republic of Iran's television, five of the ten most effective and favourite series in the history of Iranian television after the revolution, were productions of the sixties. This means that 50 percent of the ten most popular TV series among all of VVIR's television series production were produced during the sixties. Meanwhile, the proportion of all TV series produced during the 60s in relation to the total number of TV series produced by early 2012 was roughly 3.5 percent (20 TV series produced during the 60s and the total number of TV series produced was 600 by early 2012). Considering the development of VVIR's facilities for producing TV series during the years after the 60s, and after the end of the war, this percentage indicates the importance and influence of the sixties-decade's TV series. This importance and influence caused the emergence of social cohesion around television products during the 60s. TV series, during the sixties-decade were broadcast once a week. Nonetheless, when there was no rival medium to entertain the audiences, and when the country was involved in a procrustean war, these programs caused social cohesion among subjects, as they dealt with everyday life in these circumstances. Television audiences watched these TV series and, except for these productions that were not exposed to other media discourses, namely, they had no possibility to be the audience for other media discourses. There is a common phrase among people who remember these sixties-decade TV series. They say that at the time that the TV series were broadcast in the 60s, "streets became deserted" (Olad-Dameshghiyeh, 2011). This means that the broadcasting of TV series and the

timetable of this broadcasting were forming a rhythm for Iranian everyday life. The rhythm of Iranian everyday life in those days was taking shape according to the rhythm that the state television was representing to them.

The form of television consumption during the sixties-decade, and the function of television in this decade, indicate that television consumption and, basically, the television discourse during the sixties decade, was a significant element in the emergence of the social cohesion in those years in favour of the IRdisc's preferred meanings.

Television and Ideological Excitation in the Sixties-Decade

The sixties-decade was the time for the empowerment of a discourse that has chosen Islam as its nodal point. Eventually, this discourse became the hegemonic discourse during the sixties-decade. This discourse, during the sixties -decade was articulating its preferred meanings and was forming a myth accordingly. We may say that the ultimate goal of this articulation and myth forming was to establish the ideology of Islam as the social imagination among its subjects. Factors mentioned in the previous part, which caused the emergence of social cohesion among Iranian society, also played a role in the construction of a social imagination relating to the Islamic Republic's preferred meanings. The war between Iran and Iraq was the most important factor that caused excitation and the empowerment of Islamic ideology during the sixties decade. War was the most suitable factor that by its referral the IRdiscs could construct the Islamic social imagination and justify the marginalising of rival discourses. Using ideological state apparatuses, and especially television, could help the IRdisc to gain preference for its discursive meanings and to promote Islamic ideology as the social imagination, which would make sense of life.

We can divide the main functions of television discourse in relation to Islamic ideology into two parts. The first articulated a television discourse relating to the discursively preferred meanings of the IRdisc, which could interpellate subjects. The second main function of television discourse was the glamorisation of this ideology regarding making it the social imagination. In those days, the ideal subjects of the IRdisc were sacrificed in the war. Victims of this ideology had to be represented as heroes who had sacrificed their lives regarding the social imagination of the IRdisc. Creating heroes and

the beatification of war, as the most important battlefields in struggling for the ideology of the IRdisc with other ideologies, and also the explicit representation of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc that related to Islam, determine the function of television discourse in relation to Islamic ideology (Varzi, 2006, p78).

For the actualisation of the first function in television discourse there was no hesitation in explicit and direct representation of the Islamic Republic's preferred meanings. The emphasis of the Islamic Republic of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, on Islamising television to promote Islamic ideology, and also the legislation of the Iranian parliament, to determine the goal of promoting Islam in the television discourse; resulted in different programs on television, the existence of Islamic elements and the observance of Islamic codes became the main conditions for broadcasting programs. The television discourse was not articulating its preferred meanings in such a way that subjects could unconsciously identify themselves accordingly. Nonetheless, in fact, television discourse was representing its preferred meanings like a manifesto through which to express the minimum expectations of this discourse from its subjects. In the representation and expression of this manifesto, all Islamic codes had to be manifested. For instance, women in television had to observe the complete form of the hijab; showing physical touching between men and women was forbidden; using western clothing codes, like ties or bow ties, was forbidden, and also the manner of speech on television had to be consistent with Islamic regulations. Apart from applying these kinds of regulations in representations, which were, in fact, the manifesto of the IRdisc, lots of television programs were broadcast in order to promote the Islamic ideology in the most explicit form possible. Broadcasting speeches by the ideological leaders of the IRdisc, like *Morteza Motahari*, and also the daily broadcasting of Ayatollah Khomeini's speeches, were among these kinds of programs. Broadcasting the various programs with the centrality of Islam and its influences on the different aspects of everyday life indicated the focus of the television discourse on Islam as its nodal point. For instance, programs like "Morality in the Family" (*Akhlagh dar khanevadeh*) which focused on Islamic practices relating to having a better family life, or "Lessons from the Quran" (*Dars-ha ee az Ghoraan*), which was about behaving in daily life according to Quranic values and morals, or programs about expressing the Sharia rules that have to be observed in everyday life; were also among these kinds of

programs. Cutting television programs for Azan and changes in the clothing style of presenters and the rhythm of television programs during the Shiites Imams' time of mourning were among clear signs of the explicit promotion of Islamic ideology by the television discourse. A similar style in almost all of these programs, which were established during the 60s, are now broadcast on Iranian state television and all of the Islamic codes that observing them in television became mandatory in the 60s, are still mandatory in television broadcasting.

To actualise the second function of the television discourse relates to myth or ideology, namely, the glamorising of this ideology and the making of heroes out of victims of the ideology, the war between Iran and Iraq was considered to be the most important platform from which to reach this goal. Representation of the war between Iran and Iraq, not only as a war about the objective boundaries between these countries, but also as the war between the faithful and the infidel could meet two major goals. The first goal was to draw sympathy from all of the subjects of the IRdisc regarding the war issue. The second aim was to encourage subjects to participate in the war. Glamorising of the war and making heroes of its victims provided this possibility for the IRdisc so as to fill the objective battlefield with volunteers, who were eager to sacrifice their lives for the victory of faith over infidelity. Television's role in these aims was to produce and broadcast programs, which could represent the war as a war between the faithful and the infidel, and also represent the victims of this war as heroes. Producing a documentary series named "Witness of Glory" (*Revayat-e Fath*), by *Morteza Avini*, and broadcasting this series on Chanel One during wartime, may be the most important factor through which television discourse could reach its aims in regard to the war issue. Varzi in considering "Witness of Glory" series, argues:

Morteza Avini's film series Revayat-e Fath (Witness to Glory) is the longest-running documentary on the Iran-Iraq war, and as such it was the lens through which most of Iran viewed the war and its aftermath. The serial was shot live at the front, edited there and in Tehran, and was then aired on television across the country every evening of the nearly decade-long war... Avini responded by starting a film series to illustrate the beauty and true purpose of the war, in order to encourage young men to volunteer for the front...The goal was to mobilise forces for the front and incite martyrdom and mobarezeh (struggle)...Avini's goal was to be a witness to the soldier's faith and to film that

faith in order to represent it to the general public...For Avini, it Was all about faith. (Varzi, 2006, p77 & 78)

Broadcasting "*Revayat-e Fath*" began on 9 February 1986. The site that this television program could establish among the subjects of hegemonic discourse regarding the war issue, and especially martyrdom, fulfilled the goals of the hegemonic discourse about the glamorising the war and making victims into heroes. Meanings that this program was intending to prefer regarding signifiers like "war" and "martyrdom" caused the discursively preferred meanings of these signifiers to be smeared with ideological Islamic values. "*Revayat-e Fath*" was a narration based television program, and *Avini* himself was the writer and narrator of the whole series of this documentary.

Broadcasting "*Revayat-e Fath*" episodes caused this program's view of the notion of martyrdom and war to permeate other television programs. This view of the war was the dominant one and was promoting through television discourse and all of the ideological state apparatuses of the IRdisc. Although this kind of view of the notion of war and martyrdom, and even of the enemy, and the ideological excitation relating to these issues are the products of the sixties-decade, but in later years and even today, this kind of representation of these notions are the official representations of the state apparatuses. For instance, "*Revayat-e Fath*" was produced until 1996 and was attempting to spread this kind of insight about the veterans of the war, and even about the new war after the objective war between Iran and Iraq, which was known as the "cultural invasion" from the west. Broadcasting of this program finished in 1996, when *Avini* in one the war zones in 1996. While he was filming war-torn areas, he stood on a mine that was left from wartime, and he lost his life. Nonetheless, these insights into notions like war, martyrdom and the enemy, which *Avini* constructed, are dominant insights that are still reproduced by the state media. Several programs have been produced on the same pattern of "*Revayat-e Fath*", about different issues and especially about the "cultural invasion". "*Revayat-e Fath*" has also been re-broadcast by Iranian state television several times during the years after the war. Signifiers like war, martyrdom, resistance, battle and enemy, are still signifiers that are near to the nodal point of the IRdisc. Preferring meanings regarding to these signifiers has started

from sixty-decade and during all years after sixty-decade, IRdisc has tried to hold to its preferred meanings of these signifiers to retain their hegemony.

Television and the Richness of Meanings in the Sixties-Decade

In looking at television programs that were broadcast during the sixties-decade, and considering the two features: social cohesion and ideological excitation, indicates that television programs of the 60s were full of meanings. This statement does not mean that other television programs do not carrying meanings. Everything related to images and representation inevitably carries meaning. Rather, my intention is that meanings which television discourse was attempting to represent during the 60s were explicit, exoteric meanings, which mostly related to Islamic ideological values. This means that these meanings, and the kinds of representation of these meanings were easy to understand and explore. In other words, those programs were full of mottos. Mottos that, in some parts, were close to Islamic ideological values, and in other parts were promoting morality and human values, like faith, effort, battle, equality, family, etc. The lack of the facilities and equipment to produce domestic programs during the sixties caused lots of broadcast programs to be imported programs. Apart from TV series, which I have mentioned, there are examples of them in the previous part, the most influential and most important imported programs in those years were children's programs. These programs were for children who were growing up and identifying themselves during wartime after the victory of the Islamic revolution. This period, as mentioned before, combined pain and affliction, and the dominant discourse tried to naturalise and glamorise these pain and afflictions. This pains and affliction was either financial hardships, because of sanctions by western countries, or pain because of the sacrificing of victims in the war, which was imposed on them. The process of the naturalisation and beautification of this situation had to be done by the IRdisc to fulfil two major aims. Firstly, the preferred meanings of this discourse had to become hegemonic among all subjects, and, secondly, pains and afflictions that were imposed on subjects had to be represented as natural and normal issues. I have studied television discourse proceedings in order to fulfil the first aim, in the last two sections. To fulfil the second, television discourse had to represent pains in such a way that these pains seemed normal and natural. The target group of this discourse were

subjects that had recently been placed in the process of socialisation. The television discourse that was playing a role in the process of social cohesion formation and ideological excitation among its Islamic republican discourse subjects, needed to think about a generation which had recently entered into the process of socialisation and social identification. This generation was mostly born between 1976 and 1986.

The best way to naturalise and glamorise pain among this generation was through children's programs. The main nature of the children's programs of those years was the traumatic characteristics of those programs. In a research by Olad-Dameshghiye (2011) regarding the nature of the children's programs of the sixties decade, that are still remembered by a generation born between 1976 and 1986, they elaborated that two features were dominant. The first one is the traumatic feature of these children's programs, and the second is the emphasis of those programs on high human values. Most of these programs were Japanese animations that were produced after World War Two and the Hiroshima nuclear bombing. The animations that were remembered most in Olad-Dameshghiye's research were: "Doctor Ernest Family" (*Khanevade-ye Doctor Ernest*), which was an expression of a family's attempts to survive when threatened by death and natural diseases in an island. This family found themselves on a haunted island after their ship sank in the ocean. "Hatch, the Honeybee" (*Hach, Zanbour-e Asal*), which was about a child honeybee traveling to find her mother and during her travels she encounters lots of difficulties and evil characters. "Hana a girl on a farm" (*Hana, Dokhtari Dar Mazra'e*), which was about a lonely girl who was sent to a farm to work. "Little Women" (*Zanan-e Kouchak*), which was about the girls in a family whose father went to war and they had to manage their lives without a father and with a sick mother. "Serendipity", which was about a lonely boy who was caught on an island without his family. "A Girl, Named Nell" (*Dokhtar-i be Nam-e Nell*) was the adventure of a girl who was traveling around different cities to find her mother. "Housewares" (*Bi Khane-maan-ha*) which narrated the story of a girl and her mother who were forced to leave their house after the father of the family died. "Sara Kourou" was the story of a lonely girl who was living in the loft of an aristocratic house and was one of the maids there.

Remembering these examples of children's programs indicates that the discourse of television during the sixties decade sought to naturalise pain in everyday life, especially

for those who were slowly becoming familiar with the social environment. These kinds of preferred meanings were not essentially the same as the ideologically preferred meanings of television discourse. Rather, they were emphasising noble values, which should be tied to the identity of each individual. This kind of representation was not just limited to children's programs, but parts of some adults' programs were also delivering same meanings. These programs were mostly emphasising the value of effort and hope in crisis circumstances and were representing a subject position on which, according to them, each person could be emancipated from oppression by their personal efforts and hopes. These efforts were not political or emancipatory efforts; rather, there was more emphasis on human and noble values, like hope and faith. For example, the story of the TV series "Years Away From Home" (*Sal-ha-ye Door az Khane*) was about *Oshin*, a rural woman who became wealthy by her own efforts, or "Story of a Life" (*Dastan-e Yek Zendegi*), this TV series was about a young woman named *Hnikou* who came from a poor family and eventually could become the first woman journalist in Japan. The interesting point, which is worth mentioning here, is the emergence of a kind of gender segregation among the preferred meanings of television discourse. Mostly, the heroes who are carrying the ideological meanings are men, and those who carry meanings regarding noble human values were women and children. This is shown, or instances, in the difference between the heroes of "Witness of Glory", a documentary series, and "Years away from home" a TV series.

Television discourse during the sixties, because of its influence in the construction of social cohesion by representing Islamic ideologically preferred meanings and noble human values which were not necessarily in the same category as Islamic ideological meanings, has become influential and determines the discourse in the history of television in Iran. This discourse not only could interpellate subjects during the 60s, but also was a primer of a kind of television discourse articulation, which we still see it. After almost three decades have passed since the first articulation of television discourse after the revolution, this discourse, by justifying its preferred meanings, still refers to the historical moments of their articulation. Nostalgia for the sixties-decade, considering its unprecedented features, is still recognisable among many in Iranian society. Nonetheless, it is important to discover how the masses, and also the state apparatuses, are facing this nostalgia. This nostalgia for the 60s and the importance of

this decade's signifiers can, on the one hand, lead to the emergence of a significant hope for redefinition and re-articulation of those signifiers relating to the current situation in Iranian society. On the other hand, this nostalgia can lead to the attempts of beneficiary groups and individuals to extend the preferred meanings of the 60s to the current situation in Iranian society. It seems that the current television discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran has chosen the second way. In the last section of this research I will consider whether this chosen method of television discourse has led to a loss, or an intensification of its hegemony.

THE EMERGENCE OF RIVAL MEDIA DISCOURSES: BETWEEN THE YEARS 1989 AND 1995

Two happenings, in summer, 1988, and spring, 1989, have influenced the articulation of the IRdisc. These happenings were the announcing of the ceasefire between Iraq and Iran, and the death of the charismatic Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. By referring to these two factors, the war and Khomeini were the two main factors around which the IRdisc could make its preferred meanings hegemonic. With disappearance of these two factors, IRdisc needed to apply changes to its articulation to remain the hegemonic discourse. Changes had to be made in such a way that the preferred ideological meanings of recent years remained hegemonic. When the preferred meanings of a discourse are facing dislocation and cohesive factors are missed, differences therefore become more obvious. In facing these differences, each discourse has two main strategies. The first strategy is to accept the logic of difference among subjects. The second strategy is to make others antagonistic towards forces, which are aimed to deconstruct the meanings of signifiers that are near to the nodal point. In the other words, each discourse has to determine its realm in accepting the logic of difference and to eliminate the subjects who identify themselves by meanings outside this realm. Representing these outside voices, as "others" will help the hegemonic discourse to determine its boundaries for inside subjects. The logic of the discursive articulation of television discourse after 1989 also follows these two strategies. As Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi argue:

Suddenly in the summer of 1988 a new cultural atmosphere developed in Iran.

Some analysts attribute the changes to the sudden acceptance by Khomeini, in September, 1988, of U.N. Resolution 598 and the ceasefire in the war with Iraq, after eight devastating years of conflict. The war had created a grim collective determination, a central national purpose, and a ready policy for the media. With the end to the fighting—which carried no immediate gains for Iran -- there was an evident easing of cultural pressure, perhaps in recognition of the immense pressures and toll that the war with its urban missile attacks and economic dislocation had had. There were signs that the tight Islamisation of the past nine years was giving way to a marginally more relaxed cultural atmosphere, and criticism and debate about social reconstruction began to be heard. (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994, p181)

Through a decree by the Supreme Leader of Iran after Khomeini, Ayatollah Khamenei re-assigned *Mohammad Hashemi* as the President of the VVIR. This decree was signed on 24th August 1989. In this decree, in addition to the emphasis of Khamenei on the necessity of the Islamic being of television programs and the promotion of Islamic ideology and the message of the Islamic revolution by using artistic methods, this paragraph also has been cited: *“My emphatic advice is emphasising youth’s and teenagers’ programs. These programs should have fundamental consistency and be combined by attractive, healthy and breezy methods.”* (Khamenei, 1989)

Using signifiers, like attractive and breezy, in this decree indicates that, in comparison with television discourse during the 60s, television discourse after the 60s, apart from emphasising ideologically preferred meanings and explicit meaning making for its subjects, needed to satisfy and entertain audiences by producing joyful and enlivening programs. VVIR productions after the sixty-decade, therefore, in addition to emphasising Islamic ideological meanings and the adherence to its manifesto in regard to the observance of ideological values in its representations, started to be more entertaining.

The prevalence of TV series making in the years after the sixties in VVIR, and the appropriation of more of the governmental budget to VVIR to expand the domestic production indicates that the concept of entertainment became important in television productions. TV series broadcasting during these years increased from one night per week in the 60s to three or four times per week. Obviously, the aim of these series was not to just promoting ideologically preferred meanings of the IRdisc. Although, as I said before, ideological elements like the hijab and the limited relationships between men

and women, were still observed in television broadcasting. Broadcasting TV series, which addressed social issues or broadcast comedy programs, have been started on Iranian state television.

Putting emphasis on the television discourse on producing and broadcasting comedy programs since 1990 indicates that entertaining audiences has become important for this discourse. These kinds of entertainment programs may fulfil two aims for television discourse. Firstly, broadcasting these programs caused satisfaction among the audiences and this satisfaction helped television discourse to be the hegemonic media discourse. Secondly, by keeping audiences satisfied by broadcasting entertainment programs, this discourse may be more influential in other programs, which were still representing the ideologically preferred meanings.

A television program called "*Nuruz 72*" was broadcast in early 1991. This program was the first in the comedy genre on Iranian state television. This program was representing different items through situation comedy. This program was not representing any ideological meaning nor meanings that related to noble human values, rather, it was just produced to make people laugh. This type of comedy programs became very popular in Iran through the broadcasting of a series called "*Joyful Hour*" (*Sa'at-e Khosh*) in 1992. This program introduced a comedy team to the public, a team who are still known as the best comedians and who are producing programs for television. VVIR's decision to produce entertaining programs to attract more audiences was correctly shown when the third networked channel was established on 25th November, 1993. This channel was called "*The Youth Network*" (*Shabake-ye Javan*) and specifically focused on sports, especially football, and broadcast programs that could attract the younger generation. With the establishment of "*The Youth Network*", the broadcasting hours of Channel One and Channel Two were increased.

Between 1989 and 1995, the number of VVIR employees increased from 8,000 to 14,000, and lots of employees who had been fired during the "*clearing*" (*Paksazi*) process were employed again (Khiabany, p167). A lot of new television equipment was bought by VVIR that could help employees and producers to provide more professional productions. Television discourse in those years started to offer critiques about social problems in the TV series in order to give preference to its desired meanings regarding

cultural and social issues, as well. For instance, social issues like drug addiction in “Mirror of Edification” (*Ayene-ye Ebrat*), 1989; class differences in “Fragrance of Jasmine” (*Atr-e gol-e Yas*), 1991; marriage in “Homeland” (*Mihman*), 1991; nemesis in “Laugh of Life” (*Labkhand-e zendegi*), 1992, and the generation gap in “The Patriarch” (*Pedar Salar*), 1994; were considered to offer television discourse some insight.

Transformations in the television discourse’s articulation happened with the influence of the reconstruction discourse after the war or as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, domination of the “Economic Development” articulation of the IRdisc. The government sought to overcome the crisis situations that the 8-year war had caused and to reconstruct the economy of the country by providing situations in which governmental revenues could be increased. *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani*, as the first President of Iran after the war and after the death of Khomeini, was the symbol and promoter of this reconstruction process. It is obvious that meanings relating to this reconstruction process became the preferred meanings of the Islamic Republic’s discursive articulation after the war. These preferred meanings, as I have described, were also influenced by the television discourse and its form of preferred meanings articulation.

Cultural Resistance or Cultural Invasion

Nonetheless, circumstances in Iran after the end of the war, provided situations for the articulation of meanings, which were suppressed during the 60s and during wartime. These meanings and their signifiers were contrary to the ideological values of the IRdisc (Farhi, 2004, p108). For instance, Hollywood films or western music, or Iranian exiles’ music started to be available for people who demanded these products. Iran was no longer that secluded a country during wartime; rather, it could establish a relationship with the world. For instance, as Iranian citizens became able to travel around the world after the country came out of the war situations, foreign tourists and travellers were also starting to come to Iran (Amir Arjomand, 2009, p64). Iran started to build a new relationship with the international community, which was not the same as that which was related to the *Pahlavi* diplomacy, nor to the international relationship that Iran had in the war situation. This new relationship was not only in governmental form, but subjects of the IRdisc could become exposed to the

interpellation of other discourses more than they had in the past. These kinds of interpellations could be carried out in relation to meanings, which were contrary to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. Although the IRdisc tried to keep its subjects identified with its preferred meanings by accepting the logic of difference more than it did the past, but a significant number of these subjects were exposed to rival discourses' interpellations. For instance, hearing women singing, or music like metal or rock, were forbidden in Iran according to the mullahs, but these kinds of music became popular and were prevalent among the youth in Iran after the war. This was true also of Hollywood films, which obviously were not favoured by the IRdisc because of their promotion of western and American culture, but they also became popular among some in Iranian society.

Since 1992, satellite dishes have been available for installation on Iranian homes' roofs. Although in the few years after 1992 applications for satellite dishes were so limited in Iran, and a scant number of Iranians were able to use these dishes, but this limited application was a sign of the prevalence of the discourse of Iranian state television. Consequently, when subjects of the IRdisc were exposed to other discourses' interpellations, which were articulating different preferred meanings, rather than the Islamic Republic's preferred meanings, they became more fragmented and decentred subjects in the sense of identification. The prevalence of rival discourses among the subjects of the IRdisc was such that forms of illegal trades were acquired that related to exposing people to the interpellation of these rival discourses. For instance, for some years after the war, buying and selling video players was legally forbidden in Iran, but video player dealing was prevalent on the black market. For instance, film sellers known as "Film Mistery" (*Agha Filmee*) were coming to private homes as film dealers to sell or rent Hollywood films that it was forbidden to trade in public places and stores.

Nonetheless, the most widespread forms of rival discourse interpellation that became prevalent among Iranians in the next few years were satellite TVs. Applications for satellite TV became so widespread that in 1995 approximately 500,000 satellite dishes existed in Tehran. This means that if the average population of each family were 4 person at that time, 2 million people of the 10 million total population of Tehran were exposed to satellite TV programs (Barraclough, 2001). After satellite dish application

became widespread, especially in big cities, the Iranian parliament approved a law on 12th February, 1995, about the prohibition of satellite application in Iran. Nonetheless, the prohibition of satellite application in Iran, by law, did not lead to a decrease in the usage of satellites by Iranians. Statistics indicate that the usage of satellite dishes by Iranians has shown an ascending trend from the years after 1995 until now, so that, according to a survey by the “Islamic Parliament Research Centre” (*Markaz-e Pajouhesh-ha-ye Majles*), 65% of Iranians had satellite dishes in their homes in 2012 (2013, cited in *Mehrnameh* magazine). This rate was estimated as 69% in a survey by the Iranian Association of Cultural Studies and Communications (Rabiei & Esmaeilei, 2012, cited in *Mehrnameh* magazine, 2013).

During this period, some forms of cultural consumption became prevalent among Iranian society and Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi (1994) named them the “cultural resistance”. These forms of cultural consumption were not acceptable to the IRdisc, but this discourse did not have any remedy to stop this kind of consumption. Cultural products that were not focused in the same direction as the IRdisc’s articulation were represented as being the “cultural invasion” (*Tahajom-e Farhangi*) of the west and American culture. When the Islamic republic could not fully stop the consumption of these kinds of cultural products in Iran, it started to represent consumers of these products as the others from the IRdisc viewpoint, the war that was happening on objective fronts and in battlefields now was continued in homes, and the west was trying to destroy the hegemony of the IRdisc inside homes.

Ayatollah Khamenei entered the notion of cultural invasion into the literature of the IRdisc after his supreme leadership and the end of the war. This notion, which was considered to be the post-military project of the enemy, by Khamenei, refers to using the vast amount of propaganda from enemies to infuse their values and divert people (Iranian) from their innate capabilities in order to establish their hegemonic global order (Guivian, 2006, p84). Khamenei believed the enemy targeted Iranian culture, which was based on religious beliefs and Iranian-Islamic traditions. He stated: the cultural invasion was accomplished in order to destroy the faith of the new generation to both religion and revolutionary principles (Khamenei’s Speech on 11 December 1991, Khamenei.ir). He characterises cultural invasion as being part of the propaganda of a political-economy collection (Western Capitalism) in order to ruin cultural bases of

a nation (Iranian society) and reach its political aims by entralling that nation (Khamenei's speech on 12 August 1992, Khamenei.ir). Khamenei distinguishes various goals among the enemies in their cultural invasion, such as promoting modernisation, indulging in rationalism, justifying western culture, disparaging Islamic values, and separating religion from politics. These goals become achievable for these enemies through the promotion of western fashions, films and music, circulating alcoholic drinks, promoting a western style of education via books and the press, publishing pictures and posters of famous western figures, and extensive advertising of western culture through communication technologies such as radio, television, satellites, cinema and video tapes (Khamenei, cited in Mesgar-Nejad, 1994). Khamenei sees the sole way to resist the cultural invasion of others as being the promotion of the revolutionaries' values, Guivian (2006) believes: "*The theory of others' cultural invasion entails the creation of ideological consciousness and a cultural fight over meanings, beliefs and behaviours, a fight in which communicative and instructive apparatuses are the vital weapons*" (Guivian, 2006, p85). The significance of television for Khamenei is in its capabilities to resist the enemies' cultural invasion.

If we consider the years before the 1979 revolution as the formative years of television consumption, and the early years of the revolution as the formative years of the Islamic Republic of Iran's television discourse, and the years of the sixties-decade as fixation years for this discourse in Iran, the years between 1989 and 1995 are definitely the years in which that the new form of television consumption was formed. This new kind of television consumption is selective consumption. On the one hand, during these years and the following years, the programs on Iranian state television have become more attractive and entertaining, even though they are consistent with of Islamic ideological values, On the other hand, rival media discourses have also become widespread in Iranian society. Selective subjects, as Lacan argued, were therefore exposing themselves to different discourses in completing their identification process. This kind of television consumption, which was formed in these years, is still the dominant form of media consumption in Iran. In subsequent years, after the formation of this kind of media consumption, and after rival media discourses became influential in the identification of Iranian subjects, we can determine different forms of articulation in the Islamic Republic's television discourse according to the contextual

circumstances of the society. Sometimes these forms of articulations are the same as those that television discursively articulated during the sixties decade, with aim of putting more emphasis on its ideologically preferred meanings and on reproducing the social cohesion and ideological excitation of the sixties decade. Sometimes the current television discourse, although it keeps to Islamic ideological red lines, like the hijab, articulates meanings that are not directly related to the IRdisc's ideological meanings.

CONTEXTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND DIFFERENT ARTICULATIONS BY THE SAME PRINCIPLES: FROM 1995 UNTIL NOW

So far, I have tried to show that in the early years of the Islamic Republic, after the 1979 revolution, this state was able to form Iranian state television discourse totally in agreement with its ideas and preferred meanings. All of the efforts of Iranian state television discourse to make subjects and to form subjectivities by representing subject positions and preferred meanings must be understood as being the efforts of the IRdisc in order to form its subjects. Especially after May, 1991, as I mentioned before in this chapter, when appointing the president of VVIR according to a law approved by the parliament this became the exclusive right of the supreme leader. Iranian state television discourse therefore became more tied to ideas of the IRdisc. VVIR's apparatus thus became the main ideological state apparatus of the IRdisc under the direct supervision of Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader, which represents the preferred meanings, and ideal subject positions of this discourse in different periods when the IRdisc faced different objective conditions in social contexts.

The main characteristic of Iranian state television after 1995, under the influence of the emergence of rival media discourses in Iranian everyday life, is recognisable according to the notion of the "cultural invasion". In 1994, after 10 years under the Presidency of *Mohammad Hashemi* at VVIR, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed *Ali Larijani* as the President of the VVIR organisation. Meanwhile, the name of this organisation changed to Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). In the appointment letter of *Larijani*, Ayatollah Khamenei clarified the main policies of the IRIB organisation. In this letter, he clearly declares that all the IRIB's activities should be oriented towards defeating the others' cultural invasion.

In all programs the main direction must be defeating cultural, promotional and the news invasion of arrogance (Istikbar). This significant principle must be observed not only in news sections, but also in all reports, scientific and social and political programs and especially in entertaining and artistic programs like dramas and series. This principle must be cleared correctly for all employees, that alien invader culture, affects the mentality and people behaviours' through dramas and entertaining programs more than face-to-face dialogues. This unwelcome effectiveness must be avoided wisely and deliberately. (Khamenei, Appointment letter of Ali Larijani, 13 February 1994, Khamenei.ir).

After 1995, and the establishment of Iranian state television discourse, and after the IRdisc could shape the television discourse to represent its desired preferred meanings and subject positions, Ayatollah Khamenei has declared the main policies of this organisation.

The proper discourse analysis of Iranian state television seems impossible if we don't consider the circumstances that the IRdisc faced in each era. As I have discussed in the theoretical chapter, discourses, in preferring their desired meanings, have different articulations in different historical periods according to the conditions of their realms. Consequently, the articulation of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc was also changed according to the different periods that this discourse passed through after the revolution of 1979.

IRIB Protects the Principlist Articulation

Understanding television discourse under the presidency of *Larijani* is impossible without considering the social and political conditions of the society. The first years of his presidency coincided with the last years of the presidency of *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani*, and the first years of the supreme leadership of Khamenei. During those years, IRIB policies were consonant with the Reconstructionist cabinet. Nevertheless, after the election of Khatami and emergence of the "Reformist" articulation of the IRdisc, IRIB policies changed. During the presidency of *Larijani*, the reformist cabinet under presidency of *Seyed Mohammad Khatami* was elected. In consequence of this election, IRIB started to criticise the reformist cabinet, since, as I have said, the policies of this organisation were determined under the direct supervision of the supreme leader, who promoted his ideas of the IRdisc. Iranian state television discourse was therefore seeking to promote definitions of reforms according to Khamenei's ideas.

Social activists that were known as reformists have been criticised in lots of IRIB's programs according to a split that emerged between the two active forces of the IRdisc that were known as Principlists and Reformists. As argued in Chapter Two, this split emerged in consequence of the Khatami presidency.

Khamenei distinguishes two levels of cultural invasion, the internal and external levels. The external level refers to the efforts of outsiders towards cultural invasion and the internal level refers to insiders who, consciously or unconsciously, collaborate in this invasion (Mesgar-Nejad, 1994). As argued in Chapter Two, the reformist articulation of the IRdisc was formed around signifiers like civil society, democracy, human rights, and socio-cultural freedom. Khamenei, during a speech in 20th April, 2000, clearly indicated the prevalence of the above notions within society by the insiders, and this causes the advancing cultural invasion of enemies (Khamenei.ir). Obviously, Iranian state television, considering its policies were cleared by Khamenei, stood on the side of the Principlists. For instance, IRIB broadcast a conference in 2000 that was held in Berlin, with the participation of numbers of reformists. During this conference, some attendees that were against the Islamic Republican state, chanted slogans against the Islamic Republic, and a woman started to dance in front of the reformists from the Islamic Republic of Iran. A man also appeared totally naked to show his opposition. IRIB broadcast this conference and lots of programs were produced to show that the reformists had passed the red line of the IRdisc by their presence at such conferences. After this broadcast, many of the reformist press were banned, and lots of intellectuals and reformists who attended the conference were arrested. During the years of the Khatami presidency, the reformist cabinet, IRIB started to represent its desired definitions of reforms in its programs. For instance, a program named "The Light" (*Cheragh*), broadcast in 1999, was about the role of reformists in the serial killing of intellectuals during those years. Or there was a program called "The Identity" (*Hoviyat*), which was aired on Channel One of IRIB in 1998 in order to criticise intellectuals who were supporting the reformist cabinet and to introduce them as being non-religious, or anti-religious, traitors, who are serving the enemy.

Larijani was a member of the revolutionary guard of the Islamic Republic of Iran (*Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Eslami*). All presidents of IRIB after *Mohammad Hashemi*, including *Ali Larijani* (1994 to 2004), *Ezatollah Zarghami* (2004 to 2014) and

Mohammad Sarafraz (2014 to date) were appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei, the current supreme leader, and were members of the revolutionary guard of the Islamic Republic. The revolutionary guard always has a close relationship with Ayatollah Khamenei, and Khamenei has always trusted this organisation. Ayatollah Khamenei knows members of this guard as the most loyal persons to him. Therefore all presidents of IRIB after 1994 were following the pattern of promoting ideas of Principlist articulation of the IRdisc. In all appointment letters of Khamenei for the presidency of IRIB, two main issues are recognisable: First his emphasising on defeating enemies' cultural invasion and second promoting the ideal Islamic lifestyle.

The first concern of Khamenei is related to how the state television discourse represents the others and the second one is related to ideal subject positions of the IRdisc. The first concern of Khamenei led to producing programs like "the identity" and "The light" in order to determine others by the IRdisc. These kinds of programs continued to be aired during and after the years of the reformist cabinet. For instance, confessions by reformists like *Hossein Ghazian* and *Abbas Abdi* and *Siamak Pourzand* that were recorded in the prison, broadcast by IRIB in 2002. These confessions were about their relations with foreigners, and all of the mentioned persons, after coming out of prison, admitted that their confessions were taken by force. In 2012, *Larijani*, during a speech for university students, stated that during his presidency of IRIB, he was trying his best to take a position against the reformists. He also said that through producing programs like "The Light" and "The Identity" he had tried to reveal the treason of the reformists (Larijani, 2012, *Tasnim News Agency*, cited in *Jaras*).

The second concern of Ayatollah Khamenei led to the expansion and diversification of state television programs in different realms. Nonetheless, the main form of this expansion is recognisable in the efforts of IRIB to produce TV series. By 2012, almost 600 TV series had been broadcast by IRIB. Meanwhile, only 50 of these TV series had been broadcast by 1994. Namely, almost 550 TV series had been broadcast by IRIB from 1994 until 2012 (Film monthly magazine, 2012). These TV series were produced in order to promote the ideal Islamic lifestyle, according to the second concern of Khamenei. As I have mentioned before, discourse analysis of these TV series is possible when we consider in what circumstances these series were broadcast. Nonetheless, according to what has previously been discussed, these TV series were definitely aimed

to represent the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc in order to construct meanings for the ideal Islamic lifestyle.

IRIB's Resources

The numbers of TV channels and productions of IRIB have increased during recent years; for instance, currently this organisation is broadcasting its programs through 22 domestic channels, 10 satellite channels, and 34 local channels. Domestic channels are available via digital receivers with coverage of 90% nationwide. Among these channels, 6 are the main channels of IRIB that are known as the Nationwide Channels (*Shabake-ha-ye Sarasari*). These channels can be received via TV aerials with coverage of 98% (*Mehrnameh Magazine*, 2013). Actually, the greatest IRIB budget, in terms of production, is assigned to six nationwide channels, and the other channels mostly re-broadcast these products or produce low budget programs, such as talk shows. For instance, all of the TV series, which have been broadcast by IRIB (except two), are productions from these six channels. These channels are the oldest TV channels of IRIB, and they are: Channel One, known as the national channel (*Shabake-ye Melli*), which is mostly referred to by audiences because of its series, news sections, political and religious programs. Important occasional events, such as Khamenei's speeches, are also broadcast by this channel. Channel Two, known as the family channel (*Shabake-ye Khanevade*), has mostly targeted children, teenagers and families with its programs and TV series. Channel three, known as the Youth Channel (*Shabake-ye Javan*), is the most popular TV channel, mostly broadcasting more attractive programs, like sports matches and TV series. Channel Four, is famous because it broadcasts scientific documentaries and programs. Channel Five, known as the Tehran Channel (*Shabake-ye Tehran*) is the local channel of the City of Tehran, but it can be received nationwide and is the sole local channel which produces TV series. Channel Six, is known as the News Channel (*Shabake-ye Khabar*) and contains various news sections and the analysis of news, according to the general policies of IRIB. All the other channels cannot be compared with the mentioned 6 channels in terms of audiences and productions.

The role of IRIB in promoting and representing the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc that, as defined in the constitution, has to support the ideology and interests of the

state, which may occasionally be different from what the cabinet of the day (promoting Iranian Constitutional Law, Article a75) has been maintained in all of the programs of the mentioned TV channels.

It is worth mentioning that IRIB's funding comes from two main sources, firstly, the annual governmental budget, and, secondly, income from broadcasting advertisements and other commercial activities by this organisation. It also includes a TV license fee in the form of a supplement that is added to all electricity bills (approximately 5 US dollars per year). According to a report by the "Cultural Commission of the Islamic Parliament" in 2014, the total budget of the IRIB organisation was roughly 600 US million dollars, and IRIB received about US 300 million from the governmental budget and earned the other half from advertisements and TV licenses (Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency, 30th January, 2015).

Further Consideration of IRIB's Products in this Research

During this chapter I have tried to present a narration of the formation and establishment of the Iranian state television discourse in order to argue that the Iranian state television discourse has always represented preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the dominant articulation of the IRdisc in different contextual circumstances. Nonetheless, as I mentioned, the main concern of this research is to explore the micro level, namely discourse analysis of Iranian state television productions. Proper discourse analysis of these productions is possible when we consider the social and political conditions in which these programs have been broadcast.

In this research, a discourse analysis of the three most popular TV series from 2009 to 2013 will be the main concern of the study. These TV series are "The Mansion of the Sun" (*Shams-ol Emareh*), "Condition White" (*Vaziyat-e sefid*), and "The Book of Mukhtar" (*Mukhtar Name*). All three TV series were aired after the presidential election of 2009 in Iran, and after the emergence of the Green Movement. My intention in studying these series is to understand in particular conditions, that the IRdisc faced a crisis after the presidential election, how this discourse has tried to overcome the crisis by the mediation of its main media apparatus. Obviously, some programs were aired after and during the aftermath of the presidential election in

order to make others and to determine who were the antagonists to the IRdisc. For instance, on 1st August, 2009, the trial of the arrested activists after the election, and their confessions in front of the state's TV lenses were aired. Nonetheless, as Ayatollah Khamenei has mentioned in his appointment letters to the presidents of IRIB, the ideal Islamic lifestyle should also be demonstrated during dramas and entertainment programs. I therefore intend to present a discourse analysis of the mentioned series in order to figure out which preferred meanings, and which subject positions, were ideal for the IRdisc during the mentioned period in order to overcome the crisis and to be the hegemonic discourse. In Chapter Six, I am going to study which signifiers were most important for the Islamic Republic's television discourse in order to articulate its preferred meanings that referred to them in the mentioned TV series.

In the next chapter, by presenting a historical narration of the emergence and evolution of the Tehranian middle class, I will discuss the significance of the "Tehranian middle class" for the IRdisc. During the next chapter I will argue about why constructing the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class is significant for the IRdisc in order to be the hegemonic discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR: THINKING ABOUT MIDDLE CLASS IN OIL-RENT IRAN

Before considering the emergence, evolution and significance of the Tehranian middle class in contemporary Iranian history, it is crucial to justify what this research means by the “Middle Class”. In the coming section I will elucidate on the approach of this research to the notion of “middle class” and will then discuss the position of the Tehranian middle class according to this approach.

THE CONCEPT OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

“Middle class” is a theoretical concept that has been widely used by social theorists to study the social dynamics of societies according to classes. Meanwhile, class based analysis has widely been influenced by Marx’s theories of classes. The classical definition of social classes in Marx, as Lenin argued, is:

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and their mode of acquiring it. (Lenin, 1971, p14)

According to above definition, Marx distinguishes three basic classes in 19th century UK: The proletariat or working class, the bourgeoisie or capitalists, and the landlord class. Nonetheless, with the development of capitalism, the landlord class has lost its importance and the capitalists or bourgeoisie, stand in the position of the upper class, and a new class has emerged: the petty-bourgeoisie. In classic Marxist theory, therefore, each capitalist society contains three classes: the bourgeoisie as the owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour, the proletariat, as a class having no means of production and that has to sell its labour in order to live, and the petty-bourgeoisie, who are the owners of small properties and small means of production without employing waged labourers. The petty bourgeoisie in Marxism also refers to employed persons who have a supervisory function for the bourgeoisie in order to increase the efficiency of the working class. As Marx stated: “An industrial

army of workmen, under the command of a capitalist, requires, like a real army, officers (managers) and sergeants (foremen, overlookers) who, while the work is being done, command in the name of the capitalist." (Marx, 1887, p. 228)

The petty bourgeoisie therefore refers to a wage-earning section of a society, which stands between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, since they do not exclusively perform the function of labour, but, on the contrary, they exercise the powers of capital (Milios & Economakis, 2011). However, the term "middle class", in English, is synonymous with the Bourgeoisie in French, but Bottomore (1991) argues that the term "middle class", in Marx's theories, refers to the petty bourgeoisie and determines a class which stands in between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; however, Marx hasn't systematically and accurately distinguished between different categories in this class, such as sections that own small means of production and those wage-earners who are state employees, specialised workers, teachers, professors, and so forth.

Bottomore believes that the common definition of the middle class during the 19th century referred to the middle class as being in a position between the landowners and the agricultural and urban labourers. However, in the 20th century, the term middle class has been used to refer to white-collar workers, which group contained an extensive range of societies, like doctors, accountants, lawyers, government employees, university professors, service jobs, and, in sum, all jobs that cannot be considered to be labour jobs (Bottomore, 1993, p381).

Mann considers the middle class to be a part of the stratification of the workforce or the stratification of social-economic systems in societies that, on the one hand, has no sublime position in societies, in terms of having welfare and social prestige, and, on the other hand, they haven't been placed among the low and disadvantaged levels of societies. This means that the mentioned class is positioned somewhere between the "labour class" and the "upper class". The labourers are mostly working in manufactories, and the upper class contains capitalists and regnant élites (Mann, 1989).

Although Marx has distinguished social classes under the capitalist mode of production, according to Althusser (1986, p180), the same nature of the relations of production is recognisable, under the domination of different modes of production and according to three positions that each class can occupy in relation to the means of

production. Social classes are therefore determinable according to their place in the relations of productions. These three positions are: ownership -- as controller of the production means, possession -- as management of the production process, and use of the means of production as the exclusive performance of the actual labour. Determining these three positions in each mode of production leads to the determination of social classes according to the position that they occupy, and the content of their position depends on the status of the dominant mode of production (Althusser, 1986). Different modes or forms of production therefore form the economic base of social classes.

Considering application of suggested positions by Althusser in determining and distinguishing social classes, it seems necessary to briefly justify the application of Althusser's considerations of structural positions (which is determined on an economic basis). Similarly, in my theoretical chapter I mentioned the differences between the Post-Structuralist approach and the Structuralist one in their contributions to the notion of ideology. Now, in my research, which is a class-oriented analysis under the influence of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, I will look at Althusser's concerns (as a Structuralist-Marxist figure). On the concept of social class, Laclau believes, although individuals are placed in structural positions, and these positions arguably shape their living conditions, nevertheless they have come to a position within the network of power relations that is relatively stable albeit temporarily. Considering the essence of temporality and contingency for the stability of power relations (as elaborated in the theoretical chapter) on the one hand, and on the other hand, acknowledging the great influences of these power relations in determining structural positions, refers to the fact that structural positions have been constructed within sediment and normalised articulatory practices. This result does not mean neglecting the influences of the dominant mode of productions in determining social classes (Laclau, 1990, pp9-16). However, in a Structuralist point of view, social classes are recognised as constant coherent objectivities. Carrying out of a class-oriented contextual analysis requires considering the distinction between three concepts: subjectivities, subject positions and structural positions. Laclau and Mouffe believe that, on the one hand negating the interference of structural positions in constructing subjectivities, and on the other hand, believing in the absolute determination of these

structures are futile claims (1990, 107). Accordingly, within each contextual circumstance, the hegemonic discourse, by representing its ideal subject positions, is attempting to construct subjectivities according to the existing structural positions, in order to resonate better and also avoid dislocations. Nonetheless, since in the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, perpetual closure a discourse's meaning system is impossible, then it is possible to search for ideas that bring possibilities for resisting the class-oriented subjectification processes within discourses. The requirement of this resisting is the mapping of the articulatory practices and also structural possibilities through which discourses are reproducing and normalising the existing class based structural positions. Arguably, the reproduction of the social structures becomes possible through emphasising the economic bases of these structures, which is determined by the dominant mode of production. Since Marx also recognises the necessity of some kind of political intervention in order to develop the proletariat's identity as a revolutionary class (Smith, 1998, p63), accordingly Laclau and Mouffe have not completely rejected Marx's and subsequently Structuralist Marxism considerations on social classes. Rather, based on the main principle of their discourse theory, which underlines the impossibility of closure within discursively constructed meanings, they emphasise the possibilities for deconstructing existing social structures, which the assumption of their perpetual stability, raised through articulatory practices of the hegemonic discourses.

Moreover, as Norval argues, structural positions and power relations that limit individuals' class positions; are more or less determining the access of individuals to different discourses within identification and subjectification processes (1996, p4). Therefore, hegemonic discourses, through their articulatory practices, which surely based on the dominant mode of production, by representing a myth of their integrity, which arguably contains the ideological functions (as argued in the theoretical chapter), attempt to associate subject positions with structural positions and through subjectification processes, naturalise this association (Laclau, 1977, 42). Considering the principles of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, it is possible for subjects to overcome the particular form of subjectification, by deconstructing preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse, dislocating its ideal subject positions, denying essentiality of structural positions and imagining the moment of subversion. Laclau

and Mouffe even consider the possibility of class-oriented subject positions' solidarity in constructing the collective "Political" identities for deconstructing the articulation of the hegemonic discourse (Smith, 1998, p115). Therefore, carrying out a discourse analysis by contextualising Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, may take benefits of class-oriented analysis, which has formed under the influence of Structuralist Marxism thoughts, in order to map articulatory practices of the hegemonic discourse for associating subject positions with structural positions under the influence of a particular mode of production.

Accordingly, understanding the dominant mode of production according to each context reveals the constructed positions of temporary stabled social classes according to the relations of ownership, possession and the use of those means of productions. One of the modes of production that was recognised by Marx is "Rentier Capitalism". Rentier-capitalists, in Marxism, refers to a group that doesn't gain profits from operating the means of production that they own, rather, they gain profit from properties that they own, in terms of rent, interest, intellectual property rights and dividends. Consequently, a rentier state refers to the states that own these properties, such as land or natural resources, and that gain profits and income by renting or selling these properties. According to Beblawi and Luciani (2016, pp1-22), a rentier state is a state that earns more than 42 percent of its income from exporting a raw material that is extracted from its natural resources, such as Oil. These states have the monopoly on receiving and spending the income that is gained from selling raw materials. In rentier states, therefore, the state stands in the position of the ownership that controls the circulation of capital. Consequently, in considering these states, it is crucial to understand the positions of possession and use, how and by whom, have they been occupied?

In Iran, oil resources, since the exploration for oil in 1908, have always been under the ownership of the state. Although, in different historical eras, sometimes through contracts, privileges for the extracting and exporting of oil, this has been assigned to foreigners, but the state was still the main recipient of the incomes from these assignments. Additionally, since 1957, the income of all governments from exporting oil has always constituted more than 42 percent of all governmental income (Torkan & Farnam, 2012).

In rentier states, social classes are being represented or constructed by the state by being located in structural positions that have been constructed and determined by the state, as the owner of the means of production. A social class that occupies the position of possession is not therefore independent of the state since the subjectivity of this class has been constructed regarding ideal subject position of the state's discourse, and made this class to being located in a needy structural position. They mostly are the brokers, staff and intermediate agents for the government, and the oil-rent determines the formation and nature of the social classes. However, as I will mention, according to the temporality essence of the stability of the structural positions and also the subjectivity that has occupied the mentioned position, within the context of the Iranian society, subjects that have been located in this position, have never been totally dependent to the state.

According to the positions of ownership, possession and use that determine social classes, I believe that four social classes are recognisable in Iran: the bourgeoisie as the state, the middle class as the wage earners who advance the demands of the state in different social realms, the labouring class as the workers in the state's manufactories and factories, and poor people who could be a labour force, but for whom there is no demand for their labour in the manufactories and factories. These four classes are the products of oil-rent based relations, and government interactions with the middle class are forming different political forces in Iran.

Maljoo (2010) believes that the taking of profits from the oil-rent in Iran by the different states, either in the Pahlavi era or after the revolution of 1979, and the management of this oil-rent by different governments in different periods, have caused the dependency of dissimilar parts of a social class that occupies the position of possession in production relations, but always has caused the elimination and marginalisation of the labour class. On the one hand, the state in Iran, as the owners of means of production, have always aimed to use the middle class as its ideological means through which to reach hegemony, either in modernisation or in establishing an Islamic state. On the other hand, this usage of the middle class by the Iranian rentier states, has caused the enlargement of governments. Since the state has become the sole source for recruiting social capacities, and also middle class members are approaching the government with demands to increase their financial profits.

Poulantzas (1974, p237) considers attaining a justified definition of the petty bourgeoisie, which occupies the position of possession in Althusser's consideration of the relations of production, and who are generally the middle class, to be a focal point in the Marxist theory of social classes, and this eliminates the difficulties and unresolved issues that are related to class analysis. Accordingly, he believes there is no definition of middle class that can contain all of the social groups and agents that do not belonging to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and he divides the middle class into three sub-categories:

The traditional petty bourgeoisie is the class of self-employed simple commodity producers; ... the new petty bourgeoisie is the intermediate social class of wage-earners which exercises powers in the name of the capitalist system; ... the middle bourgeoisie is the class of small self-employed entrepreneurs...
(Poulantzas, cited in Milios & Economakis, 2011)

Considering the constructed structural position of the middle class, which stands somewhere between the upper and the labouring classes, Nozari (2005) has also suggested considering the difference between the traditional, new, and the middle class in Iran. He believes that the traditional and middle class in Iran contains social groups like the clergy and traditional bazaar traders. These middle classes existed in Iran before the emergence of the modern state under influence of Reza Shah's modernisation process, which started from 1925, when Reza Shah became the King of Iran. Nonetheless, the new, or modern, middle class is the product of Reza Shah's modernisation (Abrahamian, 2008, p90).

After World War Two, the discourse of modernisation under the effect of an increasing trend to industrialisation and modernisation in the west, and also the development of communications, which lead to a worldwide demand for them. The beginning of modernisation in Iran caused governmental attention to employ forces in order to reinforce the increasing growth in industries and in the administrative and bureaucratic system of the country. This caused the educational system of the country to face major changes and development. Higher education emerged and developed in order to train experts to support (intermediate) the modernisation trend in Iran according to the demands of the state (Abrahamian, 1982, p225). The development of

modern education and the emergence of universities in Iran, and the consequent increase in the number of educated people, both inside and outside the country, shows that the modernisation trend in Iran needs experts and educated forces. The development of modern education and the emergence of the western style university in Iran caused the emergence of educated bureaucrats, professionals, economists, artists, intellectuals and writers in Iran, who could advance the articulation of Reza Shah's discourse of modernisation. This modern middle class had characteristics, which were different from those of the traditional middle class. The modern middle class's subjectivity was the product of the emergence of subjects who identified themselves with newfound social organisations and of industrial governmental complexes and forms of bureaucratic relations in governmental systems (Ibid). Although, before 1957, the oil-rent constituted less than 42 percent of state income, as Uchida (2006) has argued, the state and the royal family owned more than 90 percent of the entire land in Iran. Consequently, Reza Shah's modernisation was financed by revenues from these lands, in the forms of tax extracted from peasants, and revenues from state monopoly enterprises in tea, sugar, etc., alongside revenue from oil concessions and oil tax (Uchida, 2006, p46). Nonetheless, after 1957, in the Mohammad Reza Shah era (he was the son of Reza Shah), when state incomes from exporting oil rapidly increased, he declared a "White Revolution". The White Revolution (*Enghelab-e Sephid*) is the name for a series of social and economic reforms, according firstly to 6 and then to 19 principles that were announced by the Shah and that were approved during a referendum on 26th January, 1963. Economic changes were mostly on the basis of the privatisation of the state owned lands. The first principle of the White Revolution referred to the transformation of the ownership of agricultural lands in the favour of peasants. Namely, big estates were divided into smaller pieces of land and peasants became the owners of these small parcels of land (Abrahamian, 1982).¹⁰ Since then, all of the successive Iranian states can be considered to be oil-rentier states.

¹⁰ Social changes, in consequence of the White Revolution, mostly led to more liberation for women. For instance, the principles of the White revolution granted Iranian women the right to vote, increased women's minimum legal marriage age to 18, and improved women's legal rights in divorce and child custody matters. These reforms were opposed by some clergy, in particular, Ayatollah Khomeini, who considered these changes to be the westernization and, in particular, the Americanisation of the society. Khomeini led the June 5th, 1963 uprising, opposing the Shah and the White Revolution, and this uprising and Khomeini's other activities eventually led to his exile to Iraq in 1964 (ibid).

The emergence of the modern middle class in Iran is related to the articulation of the modernisation discourse that was initiated by the state, not consonant with subjectivities of citizens (or at least, of the majority) in being subjects of the modernisation discourse. Therefore, the state's discourse attempted to make a kind of subjectivity that is consonant with its desired articulation of the modernisation discourse. Accordingly, the Iranian modern middle class has formed regarding ideal subject positions of the modernisation discourse. When I speak about the middle class, I therefore consider the modern middle class. Although the middle class is a non-uniform class in this definition, it is possible to present a categorisation of the middle class in Iran in order to determine it. Kazemi (2009) believes that four social categories form the modern middle class in Iran. First: white-collar workers in service jobs, most of whom are government employees. Second: experts who are working for the private sectors in private industries and companies. Third: people who are working in markets and trades (except in the traditional bazaar), and fourth: private intellectual jobs, like artists and writers.

As discussed, one of the impacts of rentier-capitalism on societies, and especially on Iranian society, is the enlargement of the body of the governments, namely the first category mentioned above, alongside the increase in the urban population. According to Ashraf & Banuazizi (1985), in 1925, when Reza Shah became the king, 21 percent of the Iranian population was living in cities, while this percentage was 47 in 1977. According to the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI), this amount was 68.5 percent in 2006, and, in 2011, the urban population of Iran was 71.4 percent of total population (Statistical Centre of Iran, Census 2011). Meanwhile, in 1925, 24,000 persons were employed by the state, 0.22 percent of the population. This percentage was 1.6 in 1946, and in 1977, the number of government employees were about one million persons, namely 2.9 percent of the total population (Ashraf & Banuazizi, 1985). According to SCI, the average urban family size in 1977, was 4.9, therefore if we assume state employees to be heads of households, consequently 14.5 percent of the total Iranian population were financed by the state's budget. The state revenue from exporting oil, constituted 67.8 percent of total state incomes in 1977 (Karshenas, 1990).

The ratio of state employees has increased since the revolution of 1979, so that in 1986, 2.9 percent; in 1997, 3.9 percent, and in 2005, 3.1 percent of the total Iranian population were state employees (Statistical Centre of Iran, Census 2005). In 2013, the total population of Iran was estimated by SCI as being 77,336,980 persons, while the number of government employees was announced to be 3,985,488 persons, namely, 5.1 percent of the Iranian population. This is while the state is also providing the pensions of almost 4,491,000 state retirees. This means that almost 8.5 million Iranians are paid by the state each month, namely, 10.9 percent of the total population (*Mehr News Agency*, 2015). The average size of urban families, announced as being 3.47, in 2013, by the Statistical Centre of the Central Bank of Iran (Survey of Household Budgets in Urban Areas, CBI, 2014), therefore, again, if we assume the recipients of money from the state to be heads of households, roughly 29.5 million of the total Iranian population benefits from the state budget, namely, about 38 percent of the total Iranian population. This is apart from the subsidies (*Yarane*) that the government has paid each month to all Iranians, since 2010.

The mentioned numbers and statistics, on one hand, demonstrate the dependency of the Iranian modern middle class on the rentier state, and, on the other hand, show the significance of this class for the state in its advancing, or articulating its desired discourse.

Although it seems that the middle class, according to its financial and economic dependency on the state, has a passive nature, and states can limit the middle class by the mediation of oil-rent, this middle class can, however, always question the state on issues, apart from economic development, such as political development.

In the next part of this section, I am going to consider the relation between this modern middle class and the state in the City of Tehran, as the venue of the emergence and evolution of the modern middle class. I will consider how the subjectivity of this class has been formed and transformed in relation to the discourses of different states and the significance of this class in relation to these discourses and their being hegemonic will be considered.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN MIDDLE CLASS IN TEHRAN

The Iranian constitutional revolution (*Enghelab-e Mashruteh*) took place in Iran with the centralisation of Tehran from 1905 to 1907. This revolution led to the establishment of the first Iranian parliament and the approval of the first constitution in Iranian history in 1906. The occurrence of the constitutional revolution was the first event that clearly showed the emergence and growth of a social group as the middle class. This group demanded their desires, which were based on individualism, freedom and modern values (Abrahamian, 1982).

Safamanesh (2005) has categorised the evolution of Tehran before the Islamic revolution of 1979 according to a modernisation process, which is broken down into 4 categories in relation to their functions and historical emergence. I will present this categorisation briefly, and based on my research's priorities; I will place the emphasis on post-revolutionary Tehran.

Before The Islamic Revolution of 1979

In the first period (before 1896), "The City as a Place for the Emergence of a Pre-Modern Middle Class": In this period, rituals, habits, traditions and collective memories were the most important of the features that formed the middle class in relation to Tehran. A considerable part of people's lives was spent in their homes. City spaces were formed in the traditional context, and the main function of public spaces, like streets and passages, was just for transit. In this era, spaces in the city became public only in relation to traditional rituals. For instance, the traditional bazaar was a place for some rituals, like mourning for *Imam Hussein*, at specific times of the year. In this period the traditional middle class had the pulse of the city in its hands.

In the second period (1896-1921), there was "The Preparation for the Emergence of the Modern Middle Class in Tehran": At the beginning of this era, the very first encounters between Iran and the west were formed. Few travelled to the west, and this oriented the government and people to the values and culture of the west, which were unknown before. In this period, according to various changes in the city, arguably the mental image of the city changed for Iranians. The consequences of the constitutional revolution were the challenges to traditional thought and the first experiments with other possible lifestyles by the class that had accepted and followed

the values that caused the constitutional revolution, which were unknown before this era. The middle class that emerged started to change its traditional lifestyle.

In the third period (1921-1949), there was "The Fundamental Measures in the Formation of Ideal Modern Middle Class under Influence of Modernisation": In this period, the base of all changes in the formation of the modern city and the modern middle class was an idealistic point of view, which was just looking to the western world outside the Iranian borders, both the subjective and objective borders. This trend started at the beginning of the first Pahlavi era, with the reign of Reza Shah, who is known as the father founder of modern Iran, like Ataturk in Turkey (Friedman, 2006, p286). In this period, all effort aimed to change the nature and identity of the city according to a modernisation process, in order to make the city and its residents (as the modern middle class) more like those in western cities. The conflict of modern and traditional values continued in this era, explicitly if compared to the previous eras. Reza Shah knew his reign was a symbol of modernity, and of a modern Iran, while past reigns were symbols of mustiness and cumbersome traditions. Reza Shah's authorities criticised the traditional middle class, like the clergy and traditional bazaar traders, and the modernisation process was started (Keshavarzian, 2007, p58).

Tehran is a starting point for Iranian modernity; this city has experienced lots of social, political and cultural events and occurrences. At the same time as the city's appearance was formed, the appearance of the people also changed. Newspapers, the cinema, and other media, started to play a role in the people's everyday life (Vahdat, 2003). People in Tehran started to experience bureaucratic systems and in consequence of the emergence of the elements of modernisation in Tehran, their work became divided from their daily leisure, and the division between different features of modern urban life became meaningful to them. Gradually, when this division included more and various forms, the city formed its different social and urban spaces according to the tastes of the people. These spaces were not just geometrical spaces; they also formed the mental life in the city. Streets in which people spent their leisure time; new, modern cultural centres which gave people identities; administrative organisations which provided new career positions for residents, and spaces which created new roles for women and youths. Such trends changed the absolutely traditional form of Tehran.

Although it is not true to say that these trends transformed the traditional Tehran into the modern one, these changes provided the situation in which Tehran and its residents experienced the different elements and features of modernity. The conflict between modernity and traditions has been formed as a consequence of the emergence of these trends. These trends have created new social classes, which have gained their identity from the city (Gheissari, 2009, p50). This caused a link between Tehran and the emerging, new, urban middle class. The creation and emergence of the urban middle class related to the emergence of Tehran as the symbol of modernity. With the expansion of the urban middle class, Tehran expanded physically and it also became more modern.

Living in modern Tehran as in other modern metropolises- needed a kind of rationality that makes acting and finding the relations in the city possible. The modern Tehranian middle class has been formed around this rationality, or better to say, subjectivity. This subjectivity was mostly formed under the influence of Reza Shah's modernisation discourse, which tried to articulate its preferred meanings regarding modern values and consequently signifiers related to the modern social concepts like individualism, the improvement of education, the spread of technology use, debates about social justice, especially around women's issues, etc,. A large number in this class has kept to the traditional values, which mostly arose from their religious background, and which provoke a patriarchal system in society. Values, like the traditional Hijab, have predetermined different roles for men and women, both in the family and society, and through concepts like honour and manhood, against femininity. However, the struggle between modernity and the traditions is still on going for them.

Nonetheless, the base of the city and class relations was formed on the traditions and changing this base was not so simple. The result was the emergence of twofold spaces and classes in Tehran. There were spaces that related to the previous institutional reigns by the support of traditional middle class against the new ones, which were realms of the modern middle class. These dualities were recognisable in public places like commercial and cultural spaces, and also in streets and passages (Bayat, 1997, p25). This duality intensified especially after declaring the rule of "The Unveiling" (*Kashf-e Hejab*) by Reza Shah in 1936. According to this rule, all women were banned from wearing any kind of Hijab, such as headscarf or chador, in public (Abrahamian,

2008, p95) In a nutshell, the construction of the traditional, old city and the traditional middle class stands against the construction of the new places in the city and the modern middle class. The influences of this era have changed the destiny of Tehran forever.

The fourth period (1949-1979) demonstrated “The Evolution of the Modern Middle Class in Facing the Heterogeneous Growth in the Population and the Development of the City based on Opportunistic Thoughts”: In this period, the stabilisation of the previous period’s achievements was considered, but the strong insight of the previous period in achieving development and progress in all urban matters was neglected. City constructions and public spaces have faced essential changes (Bayat, 1997, p10). In this era, new city planners paid attention to the reproduction of thoughts and products, which the original ones had invented and created in the previous period. This new group did not create anything new, but changes were the outcomes of what had already begun in the past. This continuing trend caused the intensification of the gap that has emerged in the past era, the gap between the traditional middle class of the city and the emergent modern middle class.

The traditional middle class members, who were trying to keep their traditional values, became marginalised by the state. These two kinds of middle class led to two different rationalities that stood against each other in order to take over the city (Vahdat, 2003). Both have their own spaces and crowds, but state power was on the side of the modern one. What I mean here by modernity is not a modernity that considers all its features, but I mean the objective side of modernity, which is modernisation. In Tehran, modern streets have been created and lots of public spaces have been developed. Spaces like cafés, bars, discos, modern restaurants, dancing clubs, etc., but the problem was that lots of people were marginalised in this new city planning and wanted their city back.

The rather accelerated dependent economic development in Iran during the years 1950-1970, although it caused an increase in incomes and the accumulation of capital which were gained due to the sudden increase in the oil price (especially during the 1970s), meant that this capital and income tended to belong to privileged minorities which were close to the authorities, which was according to the nature of rentier-capitalism (Nozari, 2005). The unbalanced accumulation of national capital has caused

unbalanced development in Iranian society that has resulted in an increase in poverty and a social gap between classes and even among members of the middle class. Some parts of the middle class were placed in privileged structural positions according to the support of the Pahlavi regime and were subjects of the articulated state's discourse, while some others were trying to deconstruct preferred meanings of this discourse and eventually the total deconstruction of this discourse. The unbalanced development in the cultural atmosphere has caused the emergence of dependency on western patterns of cultural consumption, the transferring of economic activities to the private sector, the growth of dictatorship and censorship to check any activities, which go against the pattern of rentier-capitalist development in Iran.

These cultural changes and the class gap have caused the modern middle class, which emerged because of modernisation, to also criticise the authorities. Since, as Abrahamian (1982) has argued, the majority of this middle class were the next generation of the traditional middle class, and had not totally accepted all of the values that the authority wanted to expand. Although the modern middle class has been educated and has integrated into the modern relations in the society, a significant part of this modern middle class have kept their traditional values and also have been influenced by the authorities' decisions, which have caused the emergence of a class gap, especially in terms of the economy and incomes. The modern middle class that were the product of governmental modernisation have therefore become the main critics of the authorities, since this authority couldn't establish any kind of social justice that was in accord with elements of Iranian modernisation.

The modern middle class has become powerful because it has been educated and has become effective in the society, since they have integrated into the bureaucratic system of administration, and then this class were criticising the authority because it wanted to form this middle class according to the imperative values of modernisation, which were mostly against the values of this modern middle class, both in terms of values that they have kept from their traditional families, or those gained from a modern form of education in universities. The authorities, in facing criticisms from this modern middle class, have established forms of repression. SAVAK (the Organisation of Intelligence and National Security) expanded its activities in universities, and it started to arrest and repress students who were criticising the Pahlavi forms of administration.

Lots of intellectuals were arrested, and the authorities did not tolerate any form of protests (Parsa, 1989, p181). The demands of the modern middle class stood against the demands of the authorities in relation to forms of imperative modernisation, and the gap between the modern and the traditional middle class in supporting the modernisation process has cracked. The modern middle class became the main critic of the authorities and their demand was the establishment of social justice and political development, which can be considered to be modern values.

Mentioned factors alongside other historical factors, like the emergence of active political movements worldwide, and the interest of significant parts of the social and academic forces in political activities, caused a significant social struggle with the Pahlavi rulers, which led to the Islamic revolution in 1979, and the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty (Gheissari, 1998, p78).

As Abrahamian (2008, p35) has argued, the emergence of the modern middle class under the influence of modernisation, and also emergence of the gap between this middle class and the authorities, due to the unbalanced development of Iranian society, has caused this middle class to become the main factor in the Pahlavi collapse. Nozari (2005) sees the Islamic revolution of 1979 as a middle class revolution. He argues that middle class revolutions basically happened when the rentier-capitalist system lost its legitimacy in the region because of its inability to establish social justice. In these circumstances, middle class revolutions are formed with the mediation of a widespread coalition between national and social forces mostly through the leadership of middle class' intellectuals and élites. Most of these revolutions were influenced by a kind of native ideology, and have had nationalist characteristics and natures. Most of these revolutions, as we can see today, either have faced defeat and failure or, again, have returned to capitalist development methods (Nozari, 2005).

After the Islamic Revolution of 1979

According to the different policies of the Islamic Republic's state in confrontation with the middle class, I have divided the post-revolution era into 6 periods in order to show the evolution of the modern middle class in the Islamic Republic's era, I will present a brief analysis of this evolution in each period and then elaborate my research question in relation to the Tehranian middle class.

The first period (1979-1981) was the: “Post-Revolutionary Era and the Establishment Period of the Islamic Revolution”: The conditions mentioned led to the 1979 revolution that changed and transformed social orders according to the revolutionaries’ demands for the reconstruction of the social (Bayat, 1997, p59). The circumstances before and after the revolution are different, and this is the nature of revolution.

These changes have had their effects on modern middle class and urban life, effects that totally distinguish this era from the past. Amirahmadi (1988) believes the revolution of 1979 indicates a national reaction against dependency on imperialism and the unbalanced development of Iranian society in different realms of the economy and politics, and it also shows the tendency of the modern middle class towards political participation and the establishment of social justice and, more importantly, it shows people’s passion for a return to their traditional culture and native lifestyle (Amirahmadi, 1988, p236).

For many years before the revolution, the relationship between authority and power in Iran was the reproduction of the different kinds of traditional authority among the middle classes. The twofold space, which was created under the influence of governmental modernisation, was reproduced for many years (Amanat, 1989). Tehran was divided into two totally different cities, with two different cultures. There was an invisible wall between these two cities. The geographical co-ordinates of these two cities were the same, but there was a huge mental distance between them. Amir Ebrahimi (2004) believes that the revolution transformed public spaces in Tehran into spaces for the public, which could be spaces for presence of the modern, middle class, and their demands, which were the establishing of social justice and political development according to their national values and traditions. Tehranian revolutionaries occupied the whole city and tried to destroy the existing class-based authority. Amir Ebrahimi (ibid) argues that, in those revolutionary days, the whole city was under the effect of this movement.

Revolutionaries chose a street as a centre for their demonstrations. This street was called *Enghelab* (revolution), after the victory of the Islamic revolution. At the end of this street there was a square named *Shahyad* (the memory of the king), and that square was the destination of the demonstrations that were held in *Enghelab* Street. After the victory, this square was called *Azadi* (Liberty). In those days “Revolution

Street” led to “Liberty Square”. *Enghelab* Street has a feature in that it could gather all of the people from all of the districts of Tehran. It is in the centre of Tehran and is almost equidistant from the north and south of Tehran, as the two opposite poles of wealth and poverty. The University of Tehran, the most prestigious Iranian university, is in this street, and also cultural centres, like City Theatre and the main bookshops, are there. The fact that this street, with all its features, is known as the centre of the Iranian revolution in Tehran indicates that, in the revolutionary era, all efforts were made to destroy the border that the authority erected between the modern and traditional middle classes and the two spaces that belong to each of them. The authorities were destroyed, and the Islamists considered that it was their right to seize the revolution’s heritage and also the public spaces. The struggles around seizing urban spaces were over, and the result was in favour of the Islamists. This new authority that depended from its revolutionary demands, didn’t want, and couldn’t tolerate, the other parallel culture in the city.

Amir Ebrahimi (2004) believes that after the revolution governmental power aimed to reproduce traditional authority that was based on Islamic and religious ideas. This authority was formed according to the demands on the part of the revolutionaries, who were Islamists. The revolution, which gained victory with the participation of many groups, entered a new level, a level of establishment.

The middle class’s revolution, which happened with the mediation of the middle class that was the product of modernisation, needed leadership. The ruling class therefore emerged to take on leadership of the revolution and to present the development patterns, which were consonant with the revolutionary demands of the revolutionaries.

The Islamic Republic was chosen in the 1st April, 1979, referendum, and then the Islamists took the responsibility to expand revolutionary demands in the whole society. Although, at that time, the revolutionary government was not homogenous and the narration of being Islamic was different in different parts of the government (Amanat, 1989), it took time for the government to become homogenous. The main body of society was supporting the state in expanding these ideas, the body in which tradition and religion were playing a major role in their lives. At that time, women and youths were influenced by the rules, which demanded the homogenisation of the society

more than did other groups. The compulsory Hijab (veiling) is the most explicit symbol of this homogenisation (Gheissari, 2009, p48).

In rentier states, the middle class and its lifestyle are so connected to the development patterns of the governments, both in accepting and rejecting these patterns. The ruling class, after the 1979 revolution, who were Islamists, had to present a development pattern so as not to lose the accompaniment of the middle class. So, inevitably, they needed to transform and change the political and ideological structures of the society, and even to change the attitude of the middle class according to the pattern of development after the revolution.

The development pattern of the Islamic republican state after the 1979 revolution sought for a pattern which had roots in national culture, national characters, religious and historical symbols, and the ideals of the middle class. This state, through highlighting the slogan: “Not west, nor east, but the Islamic Republic” was seeking to present a kind of development pattern that, firstly, neglects the west, because they follow imperialistic ideas and patterns (namely, what the revolutionaries criticised in the previous regime), and, secondly, that neglects the east (specifically, the Soviet Union) because they were following a socialist system that, ideologically, was known to be an atheistic system.

The second period (1981-1989) was: “War-Time”: Nonetheless, what happened in the reality of Iranian society was the emergence of kinds of eclectic pattern of development, which more emphasised on the socialist pattern under the influence of emergence of the “Islamic-Leftist” articulation of the IRdisc. During the years between 1980 and 1988, when the Islamic Republic’s state was experiencing the war with Iraq, the pattern of development emphasised encouraging people towards contentment, low intake, dedication, devotion, assistance to the government, neglecting western consumption patterns and luxuries, on one hand, and, on the other hand, emphasising the ideological values of Islam. The state was trying to hold all revenues since it needed to budget the war under the situation of being sanctioned by the loads of countries, which were previously buyers of Iranian extracted oil. Therefore the economy was extremely under the state control to support the war effort (Maloney, 2015, p16).

Additionally, the start of war with Iraq in 1980 provided a situation in which the Islamists could promote their ideas more than ever. This promotion was often accompanied by coercion. They referred their opponents to the tense conditions that Iraq had caused and started internal repression; they repressed internal opponents with the excuse that internal forces had to be united against Iraq. They aimed to expand their ideas to the whole society (Farhi, 2004, p104). The new authority, which was close to governmental power, expanded in the public spaces and among the middle class. The controlling governmental power established new norms and rules on the appearance of the middle class in public spaces. The state's power determined the conditions that related to being in public spaces (the influences of war situation in the Iranian society have been discussed in the previous section).

The third period (1989-1997) was the: "Constructionist Cabinet": Nonetheless, after the end of the war, and also after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, who was the symbol of revolution and its charismatic leader, the demands of the middle class changed. With the end of the war, the Islamic Republic's state emphasised the reconstruction of Iran. The first government after the war, with the presidency of *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani*, who was closest to Ayatollah Khomeini, named the constructionist cabinet (*Dolat-e Sazandegi*), and *Hashemi Rafsanjani* was named as the Commander of Construction (*Sardar-e Sazandegi*). This cabinet is the representative of the "Economic Development" articulation of the IRdisc.

This construction needed a development pattern, an eclectic pattern of development was experienced during the war and now the state needed pattern, which could reconstruct following the war's defeats and damage. In the absence of any alternative pattern of development which would belong to Iran and to the nation, the constructionist government, after facing the objective problems of Iranian society, again applied rentier-capitalist patterns to construction, because of the absence of any alternative pattern or creative economical state based ideas, and of being rooted in the pattern of rentier-capitalist development during Iranian modernisation before the revolution. For instance, the *Hashemi* administration followed policies of taking international loans, cutting subsidies, and devaluing the Iranian currency in order to accumulate national capital in the state (Maloney, 2015, p189). Nonetheless, this government was emphasising the ideological basis of the Islamic revolution, like

Islamic culture. The way in which the Islamic authority was dealing with the middle class in the city changed under the influence of the ending of the war and the addressing of the construction process.

For example, in the main squares and streets of Tehran, the function of these places was changing as a result of the sudden appearance of governmental forces. Shopping centres in the city, for instance, which were considered symbols of consumer culture in modern cities, became places for the manifestation of undisputed governmental power at any time (Mahdavi, 2009, p23). Governmental forces were suddenly appearing in public places to prove that these places were also under the control of the authority of the Islamic state, and the twofold spaces, which appeared in the Pahlavi era, were not allowed to be reproduced. This presentation of power is happening in more modern spaces and places in Tehran, like shopping centres and high streets. In these places the Islamic codes were more neglected by citizens who act differently from the way that the government expects its citizens to act.

So, the government came to the scene with its executive forces, such as the police and *Basij* to possess public spaces. The important matter here is that what the Islamic authority was facing in public places was the public form of modern middle class appearance. This middle class played an effective role in the victory of the 1979 revolution, and after the Islamists took authority, they were confronting this middle class according to Islamic values. Nonetheless, this middle class, which was the product of modernisation, has gained and kept some modern values, like secularism and individualism. These values stood against the Islamic values that the Islamic authority wanted to expand in society.

The governmental power and behavioural codes, like codes of dressing, the prohibition against being with somebody of a different sex without any official relationship, etc., in public spaces, took away the freedom to act in public spaces from the modern middle classes. For years, the inner space of homes thus became a safer and more secure place for people, where they could be invisible and unknown in their inner places. These inner spaces became spaces where people could behave freely, regardless of governmental authority (Mahdavi, 2009, p172). One of the important features of the middle class lifestyle in Tehran in the years after the revolution was home-based leisure, although, as I will consider later, the middle class could not leave public spaces.

The increasing importance of private spaces, due to the shortage of ideal public spaces does not mean that the modern Tehranian middle class were ignoring public spaces in terms of what the state expected of them. Tehran, more than other cities and places in Iran, gives people opportunities to be different, despite the problems and difficulties that governmental control may cause. In Tehran, as an urban space, different types of people were distinguishable according to different types of consumption and leisure. It was possible to present these kinds of lifestyles in urban spaces with the crowds of people in them. These crowds would be possible in public urban spaces. Due to the control of this kind of urban space by the state, the lifestyle of the urban middle class is formed differently in Tehran (Lajevardi, 2009).

The fourth period (1997-2005) was that of the “Reformist Cabinet”: People were acting in public spaces and could not abandon them. This causes the formation of resistance against governmental power, and other forms of power, that wants to seize public spaces. The entrance of marginalised groups, like women and youth, into the public spaces, and the paradox that this emergence causes in contrast with the spaces, which are under the control of governmental power, leads to the formation of different kinds of resistance in those public spaces. These kinds of resistance were recognisable in public places, particularly after the presidency of *Seyed Mohammad Khatami*, who was the head of the Cabinet, which was known as the Reformist Cabinet. With the rise of the Reformist Cabinet on 23rd May, 1997, and emergence of the “Reformist” articulation of the IRdisc, the modern middle class came back to the city with social reformist demands. The numbers of published newspaper increased, university students became more active, and public places became venues for modern middle class appearance. This caused the authorities of the Islamic Republic state, which was supported by the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, to claim that the Reformist Cabinet had neglected the values of the Islamic revolution. There have been many conflicts between the Reformists and the political group that is called the Principlists, who were demanding to go back to Islamic revolution values. Nonetheless, what cannot be neglected about this era is the emergence of a modern middle class in the city. This middle class, as I mentioned before, couldn’t leave the public places for the Islamic state. Khatami and the era that was named the Reforms Era provided a situation for the middle class in order to come back to city. We cannot neglect the fact

that Khatami himself was the man of the system. He was among the Islamists revolutionaries and was close to Ayatollah Khomeini, and he also was the Minister of Culture in the Constructionist Cabinet. He didn't question any of the fundamental values of the Islamic Republic's state. Nonetheless, by bearing the red lines of the Islamic Republic's state in mind; he addressed the lifestyle and modern values of the modern middle class (Abrahamian, 2008, p186). His emphasis on "civil society" and the changes that his cabinet made to aspects like cinematic productions, book publishing, the numbers of published newspapers, and the civil rights of citizens, caused the empowerment of the middle class. If we consider the demands of the Constructionist Cabinet in relation to economic development after the war, we can say that the demands of the Reformist Cabinet were for political development with an emphasis on civil rights (Mirsepasi, 2010, p120). The middle class again became significant and effective in society, and this class came back to the city. Kazemi (2009) believes that the middle class in this era formed a kind of civil resistance against the fundamentalist parts of the Islamic Republic's state by questioning the values of these fundamentalists in public. Fashions became important, and the appearance of the middle class in the city changed. Shopping centres, cafés, cinemas and streets became venues for middle class social appearance, and this kind of appearance became possible under the effects of the Reformist Cabinet.

The fifth period (2005-2009) was that of the "Principlist Cabinet": Although the Reformist Cabinet and Khatami have played a determining role in the empowerment of the middle class, at the end of the 8 years of the Reformist Cabinet, a Principlist Cabinet arose with the presidency of *Mahmoud Ahmadinejad*, in 2005. This cabinet was totally supported by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. As a consequence of the election of the Principlist cabinet and emergence of the "Principlist" articulation of the IRdisc, the authority of the Islamic Republic's state again became powerful in dealing with the middle class and urban spaces. Particular police forces were formed to control the conditions of the citizen's existence in public places. These forces were named the "Moral Police" (*Gasht-e Ershad*)¹¹ and mostly controlled dress codes to

¹¹ "*Gasht-e Ershad*" or the Moral Police is a department of the "Law Enforcement Force of Islamic Republic of Iran" (Iranian Police), which is in charge of monitoring the observation of Islamic codes, such

promote the proper Hijab for women, and also questioned the relationships between people of opposite sexes.

The total amount of oil revenues in Iran after 1979 and until 2011 was 976 billion US dollars, while more than half of this revenue, namely, 531 billion US dollars, was obtained between 2005 and 2009, and this constituted 76 percent of all state revenues. Meanwhile, almost 83 percent of this revenue was spent on importing consumer goods, like clothes, cars, and even food and fruit (Torkan & Farnam, 2012). This means that the rentier state, as the bourgeoisie who own the capital, decided to spend the mentioned revenue on developing a consumerist culture by importing consumer goods. Additionally, the body of the government, namely its employees with permanent contracts, increased 12 percent between 2005 and 2009 (*Mehr News Agency*, 2012), this is while, only 10 percent of labourers contracts were permanent contracts in 2014 (Rabiei, the Minister of Cooperatives Labour and Social Welfare, cited in *Fars News Agency*).

The authority was therefore facing the members of a middle class, which was made up of the consumers of the Iranian trade markets, government employees, retail market consumers, the consumers of goods imported by the state, and, in sum, white-collar workers, on one hand, and, on the other hand, this middle class was neglecting the values of the Islamic republican state. The state couldn't repress the middle class anymore because it needed it, since they were the consumers in a market that emerged from the wasteful importing of consumer goods, and also this state needed to distinguish itself by emphasising Islamic values. The IRdisc was thus articulated in a way that could make its desired subjects those who were among the middle class, on one hand, and, on the other hand, in a way that emphasises and highlights the values of the Islamic revolution. The middle class that became powerful in the Khatami era never came back to their homes, and also the state didn't want them to. This middle class became powerful in the city, and it was forming the city's relations. What thus seems crucial here for the IRdisc is the forming of a kind of rationality and identity according to this middle class, in order, firstly, that this class does not question the values of the Islamic state, and, secondly, to drive the economic engine of the state by

as the *Hijab*, and opposite sex relationships in public places. The forces of this department are allowed to arrest people who are not observing Islamic codes in public places.

consumption. It means that a form of the Islamic bourgeoisie has emerged that needed a petti-bourgeoisie for advancing its demands both in ideological domination and capitalism consumption.

In the Ahmadinejad era a policy regarding economic development emerged which was called privatisation, according to Article 44 of the Islamic Republic's Constitutional Law. This article indicates that the government must provide a situation in which the private sector is able to investigate the basic industries of the country. Again, an eclectic form of development has emerged. Ahmadinejad started to privatise industries, but, in the absence of powerful private sectors, and under the effects of sanctions because of the nuclear program, in fact, the state capital, which was supposed to be provided to the private sectors, was instead delivered to the semi-private sectors. These semi-private sectors were mostly operated by the mediation of the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (*Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Eslami*). This army became determinant and effective in the economic policies of the Principlist Cabinet under the tent of privatisation.

What seems obvious, is that this type of economic policies need the crowd of people in the city in order to support the financial actions of the government and to make money for its policies. The state should deal with the modern middle class in such a way that they don't leave the public, on one hand, and, on the other hand, that they don't question the legitimacy of the state. For instance, in 2005, 25 shopping centres were operating in Tehran. By 2009, this number had increased to 38, and there were also 34 other shopping centres under construction, and the start-up capital for all these shopping centres was provided by the mentioned semi-private sector and, accordingly, by revenues that came from the exporting of oil (J.C Williams Group Report, 2012). This means that the state has tried to form a new kind of rationality among the middle class.

As Nozari (2005) has argued, the state needed to make changes in three major realms and to integrate these changes into its development pattern to keep the revolution meaningful, because, in terms of economic development, this state again turned back to patterns which might be known as rentier-capitalist patterns of development. These realms are ideology, politics and culture. The Islamic republican state had to articulate a discourse according to its preferred meanings around the three mentioned realms in

order to remain significant. This discourse therefore needed to make its desired subjects among the modern middle class by preferring its desired meanings according to the three mentioned realms. In the case of ideology, the Shiite reading of Islamic ideology became the main ideology of the Islamic republican state. In the case of politics, the protectorate of the Islamic Jurists and the Supreme Leadership's theory (*Velayat-e Faghih*), which had been founded by Ayatollah Khomeini, became the main line in the policy of the Islamic republican state. In the Constitutional Law of the Islamic Republic, in article 57 and 110, it is frankly stated that every party and individual who wants to carry out political activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, must firstly accept and believe in the rule of the Supreme Leadership as the main overseer of the values of the Islamic republican state. In the case of culture, the IRdisc has tried to prefer its desired meaning regarding the signifiers that make the everyday life of the middle class in accord and consonant with the other two realms.

The condition of the Iranian state in 2009 was very similar to that in 1975, when the modern middle class intensified its questioning of the government because of unbalanced developments in the economy and politics. In both years, the oil revenue formed almost 75 percent of all governmental revenues, and a kind of consumerist culture was promoted by the government. As in 1975, in 2009, the modern middle class, especially in Tehran, as a consequence of the presidential election, started to question the legitimacy of, the Islamic republican state. This middle class, most of whom, especially in Tehran, supported *Mir-Hussein Mousavi*, has raised claims of fraud in the election. The Green Movement was formed and the IRdisc faced its most major legitimacy crisis in almost 30 years. Accordingly, my question is: how has the IRdisc, four years after the emergence of the Green Movement, dealt with this legitimacy crisis? I do not agree that all of the efforts of the IRdisc were repressive actions, undertaken in order to repress the Green Movement's members, but what I am going to elaborate on in the next chapters is that the IRdisc may form a kind of subjectivity among this middle class, who were the cause of the legitimacy crisis; and characteristics of this subjectivity have not only helped this discourse from being collapsed or deconstructed, but have also guaranteed the hegemony of the IRdisc.

According to what has been discussed in this chapter, the desired form of subjectivity through the IRdisc will be explored by analysing the productions of Iranian state

television and the hegemony of this subjectivity will be examined by interviewing members of the Tehranian middle class. In the next chapter, the methodological principles of this investigation will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

In the recent decades, the Cultural Studies tradition has been mainly focused on studying social and cultural practices. Within this milieu, meaning is constructed and cultural activities are formed. Considering mass media and other forms of cultural products makes for an especially fruitful analysis. As was developed in the theoretical chapter, the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe also provides a conceptual framework for considering the processes of meaning construction within discourses. Putting together these frameworks, which are both concerned with presenting a proper analysis of practices within which meanings are being constructed, better illustrates the significance of the notion of articulation as both theory and method.

As argued by Slack (1996), Hall considers the theory of articulation as a way to characterise a social formation without falling into the twin traps of reductionism and essentialism. Meanwhile, articulation, as a method, is an attempt to contextualise the object of studies. And this would mean not just analysing the context, but also providing possibilities in order to change it within the attempts of re-articulation. This refers to the main principle from the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe. Their theory of discourse emphasises the impossibility of closure and the arbitrary connection between the signifiers and the signified. In other words, in their discourse theory, the meanings of signifiers are constructed and are not inherent and essential meanings. During the articulatory practices of a discourse, elements transfer into moments. As Laclau and Mouffe argued, an articulatory practice is any practice that aims to establish a relation among elements, such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice (1985, p 105).

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, the concept of articulation is well elaborated in the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, and Hall has applied this concept well in order to map the play of forces among which meanings are being constructed. Mapping these forces is indeed extremely related to the context in which these plays are on-going. Context, for Hall, is the subject of theory, and, at the same time, it is the condition of theorising. This insight into the theory of articulation refers to the fact

that the meanings of each social act and texts are extremely linked to the context. The antagonism of social forces to constructing meanings is detectable within a context, and the aim of cultural studies is deepening the processes during which the dominant cultural order has been legitimated (Slack, 1996). These processes are the conditions and practices of the articulation that are constructing the dominant structures of meaning and power in a society. As Laclau argues: *"A class is hegemonic not so much to the extent that it is able to impose a uniform conception of the world on the rest of society, but to the extent that it can articulate different visions of the world in such a way that their potential antagonism is neutralised"* (Laclau, 1977, p 161).

One theory in cultural studies is therefore raised from the context and is a base from which to engage in political activities, which refers to actions with which to re-articulate the dominant articulation, and to break the arbitrary connection between the signifiers and the signified in order to transform a moment into an element in a discursive articulation (Mouffe, 2005). Considering the significance of context, Howarth sees studying the method of articulation, namely the articulatory practices, during which a moment is transformed into an element, as the only reliable method for doing practical research under the influence of the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (Howarth, 2005, p316). Likewise, Slack (1996) believes that the concept of articulation, and using this concept as theory or method, either to characterise a social formation (theory) or to contextualise the object of analysis (method), has influenced cultural studies' works in recent decades. This influence has caused researchers from this school to pay more attention to issues such as the construction of meanings in a social process, the role of various discourses in making subjects, and the role of power relations in meaning construction processes and the hegemony of discourses.

Howarth (2005) distinguishes two main research strategies in discourse theory in relation to the mapping of articulatory practices: case study and comparative method. In case study, the main aim of discourse theory is to map articulatory practices in a context. To do a case study it is crucial to have texts, as empirical data, in hand for studying how, in texts, signifiers are related to their signified, and how the producers of texts are attempting to transform the elements to moments. These texts could be any material that demonstrates a relation between the signifier and the signified, such as images, newspaper reports, films and visual texts, like television programs. These

texts may be accessible from archives, qualitative interviews, and non-linguistic data (ibid). Nonetheless, from wherever these data have been obtained, these texts need to be analysed in order to reveal the articulatory practices in the production of texts. Howarth (2005) believes: *“A central aim of textual analysis in discourse theory is to locate and analyse the mechanisms by which meaning is produced, fixed, contested, and subverted within particular texts”* (Howarth, 2005, p341).

On the other hand, as argued in the theoretical chapter, in cultural studies, mapping forces that are attempting to make a particular articulation of meanings may be recognisable in media texts, since the media are considered as the ideological apparatus that plays a significant role in interpellations. The process of communication within media texts may be considered to be articulatory practices in the field of cultural practices, which are shaped by the mediation of social, economic, technical, institutional and political forces, in order to construct a particular way of understanding and conception of the world in the everyday life of subjects (Hall, 1989, p49).

Stuart Hall (ibid) considers communication processes to be one of the realms that demonstrate the play of forces that are attempting to articulate a discourse by linking a particular meaning, among all of the potentials for a particular signifier. Hall’s model of encoding and decoding, which critiqued the former communication analysis of sender, text and receiver, demonstrates his approach through considering communicative messages as articulations, the articulation of encoding, and the articulation of decoding (Hall, 1980). Hall considers both sides of a communicatory process as articulations, and therefore, potentially, these articulations can be formed differently, and decoding a message (text) may be totally different depending on the attitude of the encoding processes. This attitude to communication processes emphasises creativity and the activity of audiences in the construction of meanings from texts.

This approach therefore depends on a diversity of audiences. In this approach, audiences are not a homogenous mass at all, but they belong to different and various social groups and classes, and due to their access to different discourses, they cannot be considered as a coherent whole. What is the object of desire here is the analysis of audiences and their readings of texts within the framework of a kind of “structured

social context". Researchers in the cultural studies tradition assume that the reading of texts by audiences is done by the mediation of discourses, which are socially constructed, and the main aim in this approach is to grasp how meanings are constructed through the process of production and consumption (reading) in the relationships between text and audiences, ideology and subjects, and hegemony and resistance.

Following Hall's model of communication, Morley and Brunson in "The Nationwide Television Studies" (1999) used this model in analysing the relationship between the articulation of encoding the television text (production), and the articulation of decoding the meanings of television texts (consumption) among a predetermined social group. Morley (1992) believes that, apart from texts, there are detectable social groups in societies that can be considered as real audiences. These groups have been socially formed according to variables such as age, sex, ethnicity, class, etc. We can therefore say that these social groups have been formed according to the access of individuals to various and different discourses during their identification process. Morley (1989, p40) believes that different socio-cultural contexts are providing various cultural features and sources for individuals, who belong to different social groups and categories, and this will cause different readings of a single text by the audiences. Morley thus believes that the main task for each researcher in the cultural studies tradition is to find out how social positions, plus the discursive positions of individuals, are forming their reading of a text.

"Members of a given sub-culture will tend to share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways. Their individual readings of messages will be framed by shared cultural formations and practices, which will in turn be determined by the objective position of the individual in the social structure. This is not to say that a person's objective social position determines his consciousness in a mechanistic way; people understand their situation and react to it through the level of sub-cultures and meaning-systems." (Morley, 1992, p81)

Following Morley's method, lots of work has been carried out to study the relations

between texts and audiences, considering that audiences interpret the meanings of programs according to the kind of “understanding frameworks” which have been formed according to individual’s social positions. These “understanding frameworks” could be categorised through consideration of features like politics, economy, culture, etc., and arguably social classes. These frameworks contain criteria with which audiences, in different frameworks, evaluate the forms and content of programs.

We therefore need to understand that when a text seeks to interpellate subjects regarding discursively preferred meanings, at the same time, what is making identities is not just a discourse. Rather, subjects are exposed to other discourses’ interpellation due to their accessibility. Interaction between texts and audiences has always been subject to influence by other discourses’ interpellation, rather than the discourse that has produced the text. Audiences interpret texts according to their positions in various discourses, and also according to their social positions. Although these social and discursive positions have been constructed socially, categorising audiences according to these positions, based on reliable variables, would be helpful for each individual research project in order to understand the level of hegemony of different discourses among different social groups and classes.

Additionally, determination of these pre-existing categories by discourses would help the discourses to obtain a preference for their desired meanings among a specific social group. Although individual identification regarding discursively preferred meanings is important for discourses, what is crucial to them, regarding being hegemonic, is the expansion of their desired identification process among social groups and classes. Social groups and classes are significant because the positions of subjects in social formation determine the amount and method of their access to different discourses and ideological codes. The main advantage of the application of the approach that considers audiences as cultural categories which have been formed socially (not as homogenous masses or collections of socially-demographic fixed clusters), is the demonstration of relations between social positions and cultural frameworks together with the individual’s readings of texts.

Here, I can conclude that a discourse, in order to be hegemonic, needs to recognise these social positions and cultural frameworks. This would be helpful in order to give preference to specific meanings among specific social groups through consideration of

their natures. In other words, the recognition of these social positions and groups will cause discourses (according to the characteristics and attributes of social groups and classes) to desire to expand specific kinds of identification among these groups. It is worth mentioning that the desired forms of discourses of identification may be totally different among those with diverse social positions. Recognition of these social positions by researchers who are studying from within the Cultural Studies tradition would help them to understand what kinds of identification, according to various social groups and cultural frameworks, have been desired by discourses, in order to gain subjects and to be hegemonic.

Although, in the current research, I am not going to undertake audience research, the model proposed by Morley, in dividing texts from audiences, has influenced the methodological strategies of the current research. I intend to examine the homology of two forms of articulations by the subject of particular signifiers, articulation of the IRdisc, and the articulation of the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class. Methodological strategies used in this research have thus been divided into three steps.

First, finding the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and its ideal subject positions in a set of particular TV series that have been broadcasted from Iranian state television. Second, determining Tehranian middle class as social positions and cultural frameworks that aimed, by using the IRdisc, to expand its preferred form of subjectivity among them. Third, examination of the prevalence and hegemony of the desired form of subjectivity by the IRdisc among the Tehranian middle class. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the methods that have been used in this research to pass through the 3 mentioned levels.

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

Finding the Preferred Meanings of the IRdisc

During chapter three, I have tried to present a proper analysis about the role of a specific institution, namely, IRIB, in the representation of the desired subject positions and the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. As I have mentioned in this chapter, Iranian state television, in different circumstances and in different articulations of the IRdisc, has always represented the preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of this

discourse. The main subject of the current study is the analysing of the interpretations and treatments of the Tehranian middle class regarding the preferred meanings of the IRdisc that have been represented in some of the most popular sets of TV series, both during and after the Iranian presidential election of 2009.

The three TV series that have been selected for reviewing in this research are: "*Mukhtar Nameh*" (The Book of Mukhtar, 2010), "*Vaziyat-e Sefid*" (White Condition, 2011) and "*Shams-ol Emareh*", (The Mansion of the Sun, 2009). "*Mukhtar Nameh*" was broadcast from October 2010 to July 2011, by Channel One or the "National channel" (*Shabake-ye Melli*). Meanwhile, "*Shams-ol Emareh*" was broadcast from July 2009 to October 2009, by Channel Two or the "Family Channel" (*Shabake-ye Khanevadeh*). And finally, "*Vaziyat-e Sefid*" was broadcast from November 2011 to March, 2012 from Channel Three or the "Youth Channel" (*Shabake-ye Javan*). These three channels are the oldest and most popular channels among all of the 22 domestic state television channels. This set of TV series were the most popular among all of the series that were broadcast from summer 2009, to the end of 2013 on IRIB. According to IRIB officials, all these TV series have captured more than 70 percent as audience (Research Centre of IRIB, 2014). The reasons that I have chosen these three TV series for consideration is their popularity among all the state television TV series from summer 2009 until winter 2013, when the IRdisc was facing the Green Movement, which was questioning its legitimacy.

Nonetheless, it seems crucial to justify the method of reading these television texts and the method of exploring the preferred meanings and the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc while studying their representations on Iranian state television. Justifying this method needs a proper understanding of works of representation. As I have discussed during the chapter on the theoretical framework, the approach of this research to the notion of representation is the constructivist approach. What is considered the constructivist approach can be highlighted in two ways. First there are the representations as practices that aim to construct meanings by the arbitrary referring of signifiers with the preferred signified. And second, there is the representing of the ideal subject as s/he who accepts this constructed relation.

When we study representation under the influence of Foucault's insight into the notion of discourse, the consideration of representation will contain questions like:

what features of reality become preferable in the representation, and what aspects will be ignored? What discourses and ideologies are constructing the meanings of representations? What features of unequal power relations are produced by the media's contents? How are particular forms of media content forming public opinions? How are particular forms of media representing social matters, like social class, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.?

What seems obvious in responding to these questions is the importance of using semiological methods and discourse analysis together. The point that indicates the vitality of the combination of the two methods of semiology and discursive analysis is to discover the influence of the meaning system in which discourses and representations were formed. To do this, we must use semiological methods to discover what elements are used by a particular discourse or ideology to represent and naturalise its ideas.

Hall (1997) believes that although a semiotic approach is a proper approach for analysing the representation processes. However, to extend and develop the idea of representation, we should search for an idea which elaborates the representation processes as sources for producing social knowledge (an idea that is related to social acts and the issue of power). This idea emphasises the semiotic analysis of a text, by bearing in mind that representations are discursive attempts to form common sense. Hall mixes the notion of representation with the concept of common sense, and he argues that all efforts to prefer a meaning system should be done through the representation. The process of representation tries to give preference to one meaning among all of the positional meanings of signifiers (Hall, 1997, p228). These preferred meanings form common sense by being represented in various methods and forms. We can obtain a proper understanding about the power relations in a context if we study these preferred meanings and methods which form "the common sense." Hall took this concept from Gramsci, and he turns it into a key concept of cultural studies. In Gramsci's sociology, common sense refers to the agreed knowledge among a particular group and class of people, which causes a common standpoint between the members (Holub, 1992).

The noticeable fact in considering the notion of common sense is the forming of common sense by the intermediation of institutions and social constructs. These

institutions function in the interests of a particular discourse that aims to be hegemonic by forming common sense (IRIB, in this research).

On the other hand, and from the perspective of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, Howarth (2005, p336) also sees semiotic method as the most suitable way to analyse the meanings of textual data in the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe. He believes that the application of semiotic methods reveals, or maps, the articulatory practices within discourses. Nevertheless, semiotic, in this sense, means using the conceptual framework of the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe to understand how signifiers are related to the signified. Namely, detecting concepts like the nodal signifier, moment, element, floating signifier, etc., in the texts of a discourse produced.

Moreover, Hall (1997) believes that discourses use various representations and strategies in order to form common sense according to their preferred meanings. Representation is a complicated issue, especially when discourses deal with differences. These differences must be ignored and normalised through different representation strategies, and by giving people the same cultural identity through the mediation of social constructions and institutions.

As Hall (1997) has argued, discourses apply different kinds of representation strategies in order to make subjects. He believes the consideration of different representation strategies would help us to map the play of articulatory practices that discourses apply in order to make their desired subjects. In other words, this will help us to understand what discourses are doing, regarding making homogenous subjects. The success of representational strategies means the formation of common sense according to discursively preferred meanings. The three different representational strategies are more discussed in Hall's considerations of such notion are: making others, making stereotypes, and naturalisation (Hall, 1997).

Representations are cultural processes and cause the formation and establishment of individual and collective identities. As I have argued in the section on the "Notion of Discourse", the identification process of each individual means temporarily accepting the subject positions and articulated meanings that have been represented in different forms by a discourse. Hall believes that identities are made in discourses by representations and differences (Hall, 1997, p24), and that the consideration of the notion of difference is an important element in the study of representation. When

differences are represented, we can identify ourselves according to what is represented as difference that belongs to others.

The stereotype making processes makes differences homogenous. Stereotypes reduce differences and make them natural and inherent. Power always stands against marginalised groups. Stereotypes keep social order and protect the symbolic order of society. From a Foucauldian point of view, stereotypes form and act as the basis of power/knowledge discourses.

Naturalisation is the other strategy of representation. Naturalisation has ideological functions and reinforces the conditions of the dominant ideology or class. Discourses, which have aimed to naturalise everything, represent class, gender and ethnic inequalities, and injustices as normal and natural facts (Fisk, 1998). The function of myth is to skew social phenomena, not to hide them. In this trend, the myth starts to normalise social and historical phenomena and the myth is formed in this process. The myth transfers the historical to the natural and becomes a speech that seems to be justified (Barthes, 1973, pp143-55). In other words, myths represent common sense, which is a historical matter, in a way that seems to be natural (the notion of myth and its function in discourse theory has been elaborated on in the theoretical chapter).

Considering what has been discussed above in regard to studying the representation of preferred meanings and the ideal subject positions of discourses, the method for analysing the three mentioned TV series contains two features. The first is analysing TV texts by a semiotic method, influenced by the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, which, as Howarth (2005, p341) suggested, detects concepts of discourse theory in the text. Namely, I have detected concepts such as moment, element, signifier, signified, floating signifier, nodal signifier, subject position, etc., in the narration of this set of TV series. Secondly, I have tried to relate the representation of ideal subject positions and the preferred meanings of the IRdisc in each of the mentioned set of TV series to one of the representation strategies that I have named above.

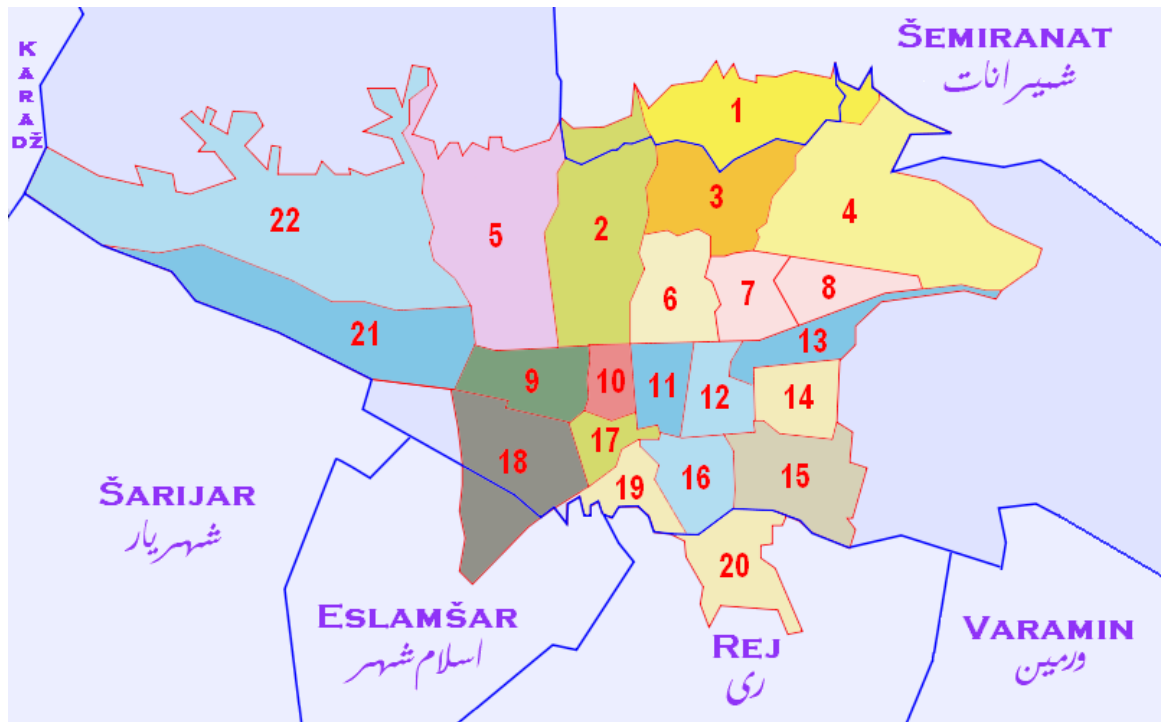
In the "Synopsis and Analysis of TV Series" in Chapter Six, I am going to elaborate on what the preferred meanings of this set of three TV series are, according to which signifiers these preferred meanings have been articulated, and what subject positions these TV series are representing.

Identifying the Tehranian Middle Class as the Social Position of Consideration

After figuring out what might be the preferred meanings of this set of TV series, and according to which signifiers these preferred meanings have been articulated, I needed to understand what the relationship of the Tehranian middle class with the articulated preferred meanings and represented subject positions is in relation to the main concerns of this research. This research is an attempt to understand the relationship between the Tehranian middle class identification and the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. This relationship will be examined by focusing on the signifiers that state television has tried to articulate to achieve the preferred meanings of the IRdisc that relate to them, when the IRdisc was facing a crisis that could very well deconstruct its meaning system.

Therefore, in order to examine the subjectivities of the Tehranian middle class regarding ideal subject positions of the IRdisc, I needed some reliable facts to identify the Tehranian middle class according to them. According to features and characteristics of this middle class that have been discussed in Chapter Four, in order to identify the Tehranian middle class I have considered some factual indices. The considered indices according to the suggestions of the Statistical Centre of Iran (2013) are: annual disposal income per household, highest level of education, literacy rate for three members of household, religious affiliation and car ownership. By considering these indices, I have tried to explore which locations of Tehran have more middle class residents and consequently I went to these locations to conduct interviews.

Tehran is the capital and largest city in Iran (2006 census). Today it is estimated there are 17 million residents in the greater Tehran area. Tehran is the world's 56th largest metropolitan economy as measured by GDP. According to the segmentation of Tehran's urban areas (which has been done by the mayor of Tehran) this city contains 22 districts.



In order to understand in which one of these districts the Tehranian middle class is more settled, I am going to examine the mentioned indices one-by-one according to these 22 districts. Nevertheless, before doing this I should note that regarding the annual disposal income, I could not find any reliable data that considered annual income per Tehranian residents according to the 22 districts of Tehran. The reliable statistic that I could find about incomes, just illustrates annual disposal income per household in Iran.

Annual Disposable Income per Household (Constant 2013 IRR)

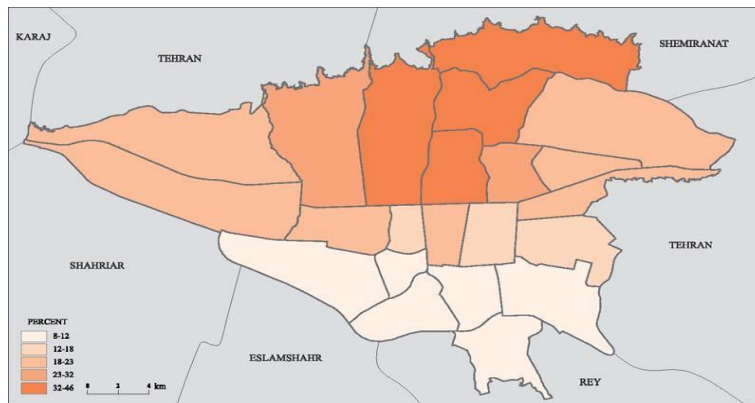
Annual income per household (IRR)		Number of households in 2006	Number of households in 2013	Number of households in 2020	Annualised growth
1	6.1 to 12.2 million	349,000	496,000	603,000	25.0%
2	12.25 to 61.2 million	414,1000	5,514,000	6,262,000	25.1%
3	62.25 to 122.5 million	4,804,000	5,886,000	6,798,000	29.4%
4	122.5 to 306.2 million	6,091,000	6,950,000	9,037,000	38.4%
5	306.25 to 551.2 million	1,373,000	1,496,000	2,474,000	66.5%
6	551.25 to 918.7 million	275,000	297,000	586,000	69.2%
7	918.75 to 1838.5 million	150,000	162,000	227,000	40.2%
8	1838.5 + million	111,000	122,000	170,000	40.1%

Source: National Statistic Office, Euro monitor International

According to the census of 2013 by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CBI), the minimum income for a middle class household in 2013 was 65.90 million IRR and the average income was 284.46 million IRR. Therefore, I have considered rows 3, 4 and 5 as the income of middle class households since in terms of income as I mentioned before this class stands between upper and lower classes of a society and in terms of population this class is more populated than the other two classes.

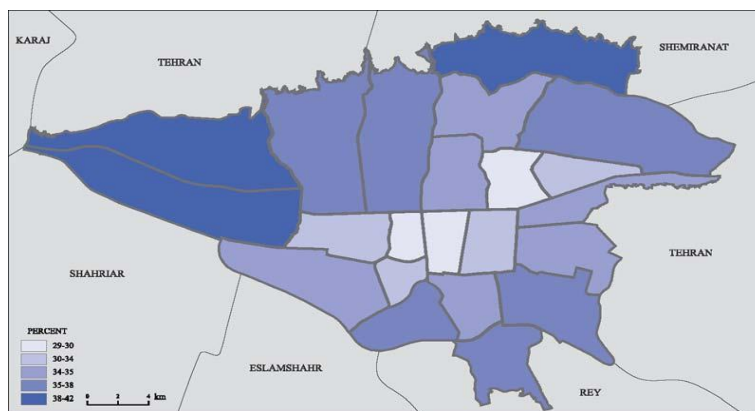
The following represents key attributes from the Atlas Tehran Study. The data is based on the 2006 Census (sometimes comparing to the 2001 Census). By reviewing the maps that demonstrate the density of Tehran's residents according to the indices that I have mentioned, my aim is to elaborate which districts of Tehran have more middle class residents. This would be helpful for this research in order to conduct interviews from the Tehranian middle class according to where they live.

Highest level of education:



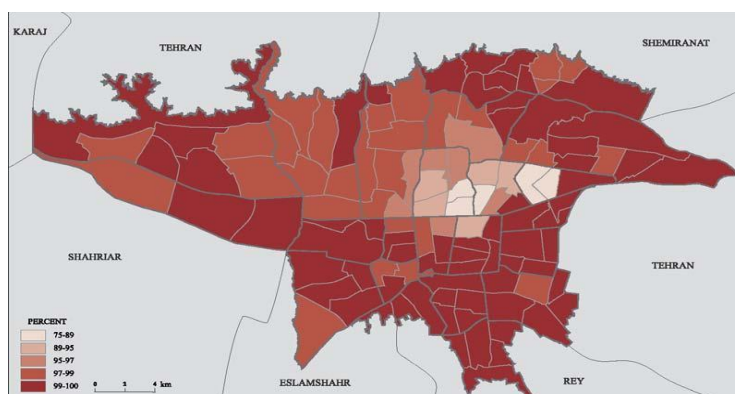
According to the above map, districts 1, 3, 6 and 2 have a high concentration of residents with the highest level of education. After these, districts 7, 5 and 11 have the most residents with the highest level of education.

Literacy rates for three member of household:



According to the above map, districts 1, 22 and 21 have the highest rates of literacy. After these, rates of literacy in districts 2, 5, 4, 15, 19 and 20 are higher than in other districts.

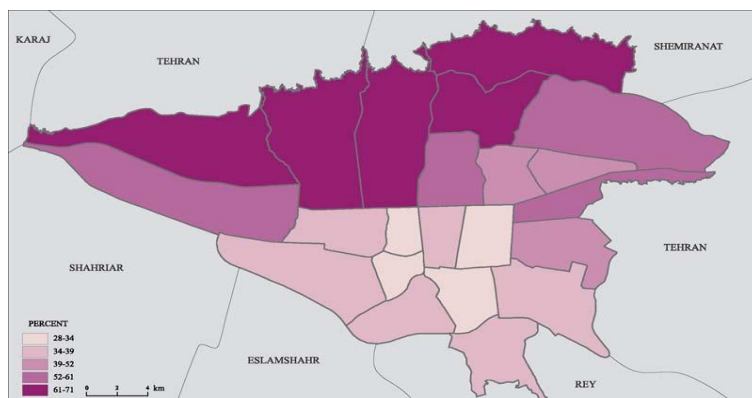
Religious affiliation:



According to the above map, residents in districts 3, 6, 7, 2, 5 and 1 are having more

moderate religious affiliation than other districts of Tehran. The rate of religious affiliation in these districts is from 89% to 92%. Considering the fact that Iranian society is a religious society, the above rate can be considered a moderate rate of religious affiliation in Tehran. Assessing religious affiliation in identifying the Tehranian middle class is important, since as I argued in the section of middle class, this class is more secular than other classes in the Iranian society.

Car ownership:



According to the above map, residents of districts 1, 3, 2, 5 and 22 own cars more than residents of other districts.

With comparison of the above maps we can conclude that the middle class people in Tehran according to indices that have been considered, are probably more likely to reside in districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11. Therefore, in order to identify people who belong to the modern Tehranian middle class, I used a geographic grid and went to specifically those districts in order to conduct interviews. In addition, according to what was discussed in the chapter on the middle class, about occupation and the lifestyle of this class which takes advantage of technology and modern facilities of communication, I considered some other factors like occupation, using satellite TV, using internet and housing as complementary factors in order to identify members of the Tehranian middle class alongside mentioned indices. These factors were illustrative especially when I approached women who were housekeepers, students who didn't have full-time jobs, or people who didn't have any university degree, but still in terms of their lifestyle and use of the middle class' structural facilities, like internet and satellite, could be considered as members of the Tehranian middle class.

Examination of Prevalence of Desired Form of Subjectivity by IRdisc among the Tehranian Middle Class

As the main concern of this research, I am going to study the perception of Tehranian middle class of subject positions that have been represented in a particular set of TV series on Iranian state television. I have considered this set of TV series as formations, which contain different and sometimes antithetical features in order to present subject positions and articulate discursive preferred meanings regarding to specific signifiers. On the other hand, subjectivities of the Tehranian middle class also have been considered as formations. These also, of course, contain different and antithetical features and elements. The ultimate goal of this research is to study interactions and confrontations of these formations. In order to grasp this relationship I have selected the method of the semi-structured qualitative interview. As Howarth argues:

“For an approach that stresses the importance of subjectivity in explaining social reality, and which seeks to provide ‘thick descriptions’ of events and processes, which are not readily achievable from a purely positivistic point of view, in-depth qualitative interviewing is an important means of generating primary texts” (Howarth, 2005, p338).

The method of analysing data that was collected from qualitative interviews accordingly requires specific methods of qualitative analysis of data. I now must therefore present the methods for gathering and analysing data from interviews.

Method of collecting data

The application of qualitative methods can be considered as the most common and proper method in studies under the influence of the cultural studies school. Methods like “focused group”, “interview”, “ethnography”, etc. are among the qualitative methods. In addition, in the discourse theories of Laclau and Mouffe, application of the method of qualitative interview is known as a method that investigates processes of the construction of subjectivity. As Repstad (1987) and Ryen (2002) argue: “A qualitative interview is an excellent method if you want to gain insight into the intentions, feelings, purposes and comprehensions of the interviewee. The interview

can also represent insights into how individual interviewees interpret themselves and how they interpret the phenomenon under study” (cited in Cruickshank, 2012).

Therefore, the main method that I have applied in order to understand the relationship between preferred meanings of texts and subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class members, is the “interview.” In general, researchers have applied five methods of interview:

- 1- Structured interviews
- 2- Semi-structured interviews
- 3- Non-directive interviews
- 4- Focused interviews
- 5- Informal conversational Interviews (Gray, 2004, p215).

In the current study the kind of interview that I have aimed to apply, is the semi-structured interview. In this method the researcher has a list of questions and issues to be covered and is trying to understand the position of the interviewee with regards to a specific issue. However, questions are not constructed and interviewees are allowed to express their opinions about the researcher’s questions (ibid). In the qualitative methods of research, the sampling methods of probability sampling and randomisation are often not applied at all. Unlike quantitative methods where sampling is based on statistical logic, in qualitative methods, samples are being selected strategically. One of these strategies is “theoretical or purposive sampling”. In this strategy, the sampling will be done based on a theoretical basis, instead of relying on randomisation. In theoretical or purposive sampling, the magnitude of samples is not determinant. Instead, samples have to be selected in a way to help the researcher in expanding and examining the theory and hypothesis of research. In qualitative methods, normally, because of practical reasons, the sample groups are smaller than when quantitative methods are used. In addition, in qualitative methods, normally researchers are not pre-determining the number of samples. In this method, the process of expanding and examining the hypothesis during the research determines the sufficient number of samples. The number of samples is sufficient when the research reaches the theoretical saturation point. This is a point that the researcher can claim that the research is presenting the reliable image of the case study related to the theory and hypothesis of research (Gray, 2004).

Since in qualitative methods the predetermination of amount and size of sampling is not recommended, therefore in this research in conducting interviews from the Tehranian middle class members, I continued to interview till I was satisfied that the research has reached the theoretical saturation point. It means that I was convinced that further data gathering from interviewees would not increase my knowledge of the question of research and would not add any new kind of Tehranian middle class perception from subject positions and preferred meanings that have been represented.

In the current study firstly I aimed to interview 45 individuals, but after 45 interviews I realised that interviewing more could add to the overall information gathered. Therefore I decided to increase the number of interviewees to 90 in order to avoid any methodological or sampling failure and negligence. In the current study I have interviewed 90 individuals and all these 90 interviewees can be considered as Tehranian middle class according to the indices that I have mentioned above.

Process of interviews

In order to conduct interviews on the basis described above, I went to those districts that had a significant number of middle class residents. The first question that I have asked from each interviewee was about the considered indices to make sure that the interviewee can be considered in the category of the middle class. Questions about sex, education, district of residency, monthly household income, occupation, rate of religious affiliation from 0 to 10, car ownership, usage of satellite TV and usage of Internet were the primary questions, which I asked each interviewee. If answers of the interviewees to these questions demonstrated that they belong to the Tehranian middle class, then I proceeded to interview them.

As I have argued before, according to mentioned indices, nine districts of Tehran have the most middle class residents, therefore I conducted 10 interviews from each district. In my sampling I have tried to observe the gender balance. Thus, 48 of the interviewees were female and 42 were male. I have conducted all interviews in public places such as cafés (15 interviews), parks (19 interviews), metro carriages/stations (11 interviews), restaurants (18 interviews), work offices (11 interviews) and streets (16 interviews). Most of the interviews have been conducted during the lunchtime of the

employees.

Each interview started with questions such as: can I take a few minutes of your time? Can I talk to you for a few minutes? And people mostly responded: about what? And I explained to them that I am a Ph.D. student in London and need to conduct interviews to complete my thesis. Also, I showed them my student card to assure them that I am a student. Except 13 people that told me that they did not have enough time right now, everyone else engaged me in conversation immediately upon seeing my SOAS student card. When they asked me questions such as the nature of my studies, I often responded to them that they will realise what I am studying during the interview. I had to deflect any questions they had for me so that I could begin the interview and determine if they were classified as Tehranian middle class. I also needed to explain why I had to ask certain personal questions and the scope of my research. Some people according to their responses to primary questions couldn't be considered as middle class members, so I apologised to them and finished the interview respectfully. In order to conduct 90 interviews, I approached approximately 137 people. Thirteen of these people did not agree to the interview since they had time constraints and 34 persons could not be considered as members of Tehranian middle class according to their responses to my primary questions. The maximum time of interviews was 45 minutes and the minimum time was 15 minutes. The average time of interviews was about 30 minutes. I have conducted interviews during two periods. The first period was from 12th of July 2013 to 19th of October 2013 and the second period was from 16th of May 2014 to 30th of July 2014. In each period I conducted 45 interviews. All interviews have been recorded by a voice recorder and transcribed on the same day of the interview.

As mentioned before, I have conducted semi-structured interviews, consequently, I have tried to carry interviews without any prejudice and inducing particular ideas, but meanwhile I have tried to propel the direction (not content) of interviews to questions related to nodal signifiers of TV series.

Content of interviews

The subjects of the interviews were signifiers that were discussed in the set of three TV series to represent the ideal subject positions and preferred meanings of the IRdisc

regarding them. In the coming chapter of this research I will describe the analysis of the television programmes. Suffice it to say here that I identified three nodal signifiers. The nodal signifier in "*Shams-ol Emareh*" is signifier of "woman". In "*Vaziyat-e Sefid*" the attempt of the IRIB seems to be the articulation of its preferred meaning regarding the signifier of the "60s decade." Finally, the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" can be considered as an attempt to represent ideal subject positions of IRdisc by clarifying the position of others in regards to the signifier of "sovereignty". Therefore each interview that I have conducted consisted of four parts. The first part was about general information about indices as I have mentioned above. According to the interviewees' answers to the part one, if they could be considered as the Tehranian middle class, I began to ask them questions about their relationship to the above signifiers in three parts in order to grasp how they are identifying themselves according to each signifier. Since the interviews were semi-structured, I have not asked all interviewees the same questions to clarify their positions with regards to those three signifiers, but I have managed interviews in a way that at the end of each interview, the position of the interviewee regarding the three signifiers was clear to me and their answers were valuable for explanation of the theory and the hypothesis of research. Some examples of the questions that I have asked in interviews in regard to the signifier of "woman" were: in your opinion, in the division between house chores and earning money for household, what is the difference between the roles of women and men? Are you considering the role of being a mother as a role that historically has been formed or do you consider women as inherent mothers? After a couple becomes mother and father, which one should take the major responsibility for upbringing children? Do you believe that a mother can have a job and earn money? What kind of social activities do you believe that a woman can have?

In the third part of the interviews, the subject of the signifier was the 60s decade. This refers to the years 1360-69 on the Iranian calendar, which equates to March 1981 to March 1991 on the Gregorian calendar. Here, I asked questions like: Do you have nostalgia for the 60s? How do you describe your living situation during the 60s? What are the significant features of the 60s decade in your opinion? How were the relations between people during the 60s? When you think about the 60s, what elements do you think specifically belong to that decade?

As I continued the interviews, I began the fourth part by the subject of the signifier of sovereignty by asking questions such as, what is your opinion about the concept of supreme leadership and the protectorship of the Islamic Jurists (*velayat-e faghih*) in the Islamic Republic? What do you think of the actions of the current supreme leader (*vali-ye faghih*)? How do you see the role of the supreme leader in governing the state? Do you believe in the legitimacy of the sovereignty under the supervision of the supreme leader? Interviewees' responses to these kinds of questions in each part, have clarified their positions in regards to signifiers that I have mentioned above.

Since before conducting interviews, preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding mentioned signifiers were clear for me, therefore, questions of interviews have been asked considering these preferred meanings in order to examine interviewees subjectivities to these meanings that will be discussed during the next chapter which contains analyses of the set of the three TV series.

To summarise, I interviewed 90 members of the Tehranian middle class. Through these 90 interviews, I have highlighted two basic phrases by each interviewee that are demonstrating the position of each interviewee regarding each signifier of "women", "the 60s" and "sovereignty". Thus 180 statements have been highlighted according to each of the three selected signifiers--totalling 540 statements--which are the exact words and phrases used by the interviewees. In the next section I am going to present the method that I have applied for analysing data that I have collected from interviews.

Difficulties of doing the research

Unlike my assumption before starting to conduct interviews, the process of conducting interviews passed very smoothly. Although conducting interviews took a long time and sometimes was exhausting, I did not face any major difficulties either in sampling or reaching interviewees. The only difficulty that I faced in doing my research was obtaining data from officials. Since I was collecting data for this research at a time after the election of 2009, officials of IRIB never cooperated with me despite my efforts to obtain some data from this organisation about percentages of their audiences, and policies of this organisation after the presidential election of 2009. As I was told, after the emergence of the Green Movement, a declaration by the chief of IRIB has required all departments of this organisation to not cooperate with any researchers or

educational institutions in handing them any data or statistics. Nonetheless, I could just obtain statistics about the most popular set of TV series, from summer of 2009 to winter of 2013, from the official site of IRIB, since they released their data on popular programs every year. In encountering this difficulty, instead of relying on statistics, I have tried my best to respond to the main concern of this research through the application of a theoretical framework, which made it possible for me to theoretically respond to the main question of the research by elaborating the significance of studying representations of IRIB, as an ideological state apparatus of the IRdisc.

Process of Data Analysing

Data that have been obtained from interviews could be analysed by using three different methods. The first one is quantitative method. The second is structural analysis and the third is interpretive analysis (Gillham, 2000).

In the first method, the researcher uses statistical methods in order to present a proper analysis of data that have been collected from interviews. In the second method, structural component of interviews' texts, namely words, terms, concepts and relations between them are reviewed based on their repetition rate and the numbers of words, terms and other factors which have been used in sentences by interviewees in order to discover the patterns of statements. And in the third method the researcher tries to demonstrate hidden messages in the interview texts (Gillham, 2000, p63).

The method of this research in analysing interview data is interpretive analysis. In order to present a proper analysis regarding interview data, Gillham (2000) suggested that interviews' data should be categorised. Categorising data of interviews is the most efficient way of analysing highlighted statements in order to grasp the positions of interviewees. The categorisation could be done in two different ways. Firstly according to a theoretical framework of the study and secondly in order to reach a contextual theory according to the interview data (ibid). Since this research considers the theory of discourse analysis by Laclau and Mouffe as the main theoretical framework of the study, I have decided to define categories based on this theory.

As Rubin (2005) has suggested, in order to reach proper and effective categories for data analysis, it is necessary to follow certain steps:

- 1- Setting down the interview texts and reviewing them.
- 2- Highlighting basic statements and eliminating repetitive and non-related statements.
- 3- Highlighting statements which contained new points of view on the issue of the interview.
- 4- Going back to the main texts of interviews to be sure there is no neglect in highlighting any basic statements.
- 5- Putting together the highlighted statements, which were demonstrating the similar point of view by interviewees regarding to issue of interviews.
- 6- Extracting categories based on the theoretical framework from the similar statements and naming them.
- 7- Reviewing categories in order to avoid any mistakes in putting the similar statements together, and being sure of the consistency of each statement within the related categories.
- 8- Reviewing the list of categories and testing the chance of elimination or combination of obtained categories.
- 9- Listing the highlighted statements under related categories.

It is worth mentioning that in passing the eighth step, after defining some categories based on the content of interviews, I have modified the determined categories. The base of category modification was elimination of non-related content to the subject of the study. The merger of similar categories and the highlighting of the topics and headlines that illustrate the content of the interviews came next. The modification of categories based on elimination of non-related content seems necessary in this method. After all, the method of the conducted interviews was semi-structured. I did not interrupt my interviewees when they spoke. Sometimes not interrupting interviewees caused the emergence of a new category that was related to the subject of the study and sometimes caused the deviation of interviews from the main topic. Therefore in order to avoid any deviation from the subject of the study in the data analysing, I have eliminated categories, which were non-related. Additionally, I have eliminated categories that although were related to the question of the study, were mentioned less than five times overall by the interviewees. Merging related categories also helped me determine a range related to the different topics and headlines that

have been mentioned by interviewees. This means I have merged categories that were presenting the same formation but were mentioned by interviewees under different topics and headlines.

After completing the steps, and based on the interviews, four categories in regard to signifiers of women and sovereignty and two major categories plus four sub-categories in regard to signifier of the 60s were obtained. Each category represents a kind of subject position in regard to preferred meanings of the IRdisc. In categorising the interviewee's statements, I have used a conceptual framework that Laclau and Mouffe have articulated in their discourse theory. All theoretical concepts that I have used in naming and analysing categories have been discussed and elaborated in the theoretical chapter of this research.

Accordingly, I have reached the number of categories that were representing subjectivity of interviewees regarding the three signifiers that I have mentioned before. In analysing each category I have tried to not just repeat statements by interviewees, but I have tried to present understandable analysis based on the theoretical framework of this study. I have quoted some statements in the text of the analysis and have provided a table of statements related to each category, which is available in appendices. Additionally, I have not asked the name of interviewees during the interviews. Therefore in quoting from interviewees in the text, I have mentioned the number that I have given to each interviewee in the table of interviewees, which is also available in the appendices. Furthermore, as Gillham (2000) has suggested, in analysing each category I have mentioned the number of interviewees and statements and their percentages; and in the conclusion of each category's analysis, I have provided a table of these numbers to reach a proper examination of the hegemony of the IRdisc in constructing the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class.

Since the categorisation of the interview data has been done based on the position of the interviewees in regard to preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding mentioned signifiers, during the next chapter, by presenting synopsis and analysis of each TV series, I am going to elaborate what particular preferred meaning and subject position each TV series has tried to represent.

Afterwards, in Chapter Seven, I am going to demonstrate what categories have been obtained through interviews regarding each signifier, and will present a proper analysis

of categories, based on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis theory.

CHAPTER SIX: BODY OF THE RESEARCH, FINDINGS 1: TV SERIES; SYNOPSIS AND ANALYSIS

During this chapter I am going to present a synopsis of each TV series and consequently will provide an analysis of each TV series. During my analysis of each TV series I explore the signifiers through which the IRdisc has tried to represent its ideal subject positions and preferred meanings and will make an argument about exactly what are these preferred meanings and desired subject positions. Through my analysis, I will try to argue each mentioned TV series is following one of the representation strategies: making others, making stereotypes and naturalisation. I will try to argue that preferred meanings of each TV series have different functions for the IRdisc in order to construct subjectivities that secure this discourse from being deconstructed and remain the hegemonic discourse. Consequently, I will refer each of these strategies to a conceptual framework of discourse analysis that I have elaborated in the theoretical framework chapter.

I should point out here that although it is possible that these TV series were produced before emergence of the dislocation within the IRdisc preferred meanings, but this is really not important in reading these texts according to contextual circumstances after the emergence of the dislocation. Since as I have argued in the theoretical chapter, the reading of a text, should be done according its contextual conditions of representing discursive ideal subject positions and preferred meanings, not the intentions of the producers. These TV series broadcasted after the 2009 election and I need to read these texts according to contextual conditions of their broadcasting, since interpellation of subjects is tightly related to the contextual conditions of representation. This is the work of discourse analysis to read texts contextually when they attempt to interpellate subjects.

“SHAMS-OL EMAREH” TV SERIES

This TV series has been broadcasted from Network Two of IRIB during summer of 2009 in 26 episodes.

Synopsis of “*Shams-ol Emareh*” TV Series

The “*Shams-ol Emareh*” series narrates a story about a family living in a luxurious mansion. This mansion that the residents call “*Shams-ol Emareh*” (Mansion of the Sun), is a very expensive building that has come into the possession of its occupants through inheritance. The original owners of the mansion are a brother and sister who inherited parts of it and bought the rest from their siblings. *Leila* (the main character) is the daughter and nephew of this brother and sister respectively. Other residents of the mansion include *Shamsi* who is *Leila*’s aunt (her father’s sister) and the owner of the mansion. She is a middle-aged single woman who is suffering from a serious illness. However, all the mansion’s affairs are done under her supervision. When young, *Shamsi* was in love with a man called *Farrokh*, but this love for reasons that *Shamsi* calls selfishness did not end well, and *Shamsi* has not entered a relationship with any man since. She seems a self-made, tough and independent woman who despite her illness is still in charge of the mansion. She is charismatic and enjoys the respect of all who set foot in the mansion. *Hormoz* is *Shamsi*’s brother and *Leila*’s uncle (her father’s brother). He is a middle-aged divorced man. He is a traveller and he has sold his share of the mansion to his sister to travel around the world. He has recently returned home after spending most of his life traveling abroad. This has made the residents see him as an experienced and cosmopolitan man and they seek his advice in their affairs.

Rahmat and *Zivar* are a couple and the caretakers of the mansion. *Rahmat*’s humour is a main appeal of this TV series. He has grown up in the mansion and his father was also the mansion’s caretaker. He is the servant of the house who also considers himself to have some authority. He feels he has a say in everything and also ownership rights, since he was born in the place and has lived there all his life. His comments are mostly about marginal problems to make him convey the humour of the story. His wife is a woman who, despite being the wife of the mansion’s janitor, engages with the main residents. She is from a lower social status but has adopted the values of the residents’ social status. She goes to yoga and aerobic classes and wants to learn working with the computer and the Internet.

This couple has a daughter named *Sharifeh* who is the same age as *Leila*. She is educated and has gone to university and wants to continue her education. As a kid she was the playmate for *Leila*, but now she is more aware of the social gap between

them, and some manifestations of this gap bother her. *Shakour* is *Leila's* cousin (her aunt's son) who has recently married and is living in a room of the mansion with his wife, *Darya*. Throughout the story, this couple is constantly involving the rest of the residents in their marital problems, problems such as *Shakour's* unemployment and profound lack of interest in anything. During the entire story, *Darya* compares her life with *Leila's* and the fact that her life quality is lower than *Leila's* bothers her. She asks *Shakour* to improve their life; but *Shakour* is satisfied with his life. *Pari* is *Darya's* mother who lives in the mansion as well. She has a humorous character and good social skills. She has been married and divorced three times. She falls in love with *Hormoz*. *Pari* also has come from a different social status from the owners of the mansion and tries to copy their manner, which in turn causes many comic situations in the series. She compares her position with *Shamsi's* in the mansion of which she is envious. Unemployment is another point that reflects the lifestyle of the original owners of the mansion. Apparently, all of the main family members (except *Rahmat* and *Zivar* who are the janitors of the mansion) are unemployed. There are no concerns about daily living expenses among these characters, and they do not show any attempts to make money.

The story of the series begins with the death of *Leila's* father, who was suffering from diabetes and died from eating sweets in *Shakour* and *Darya's* wedding. After the funeral, *Shamsi* passes *Leila* her father's will. According to the will *Leila* will inherit the *Shams-ol Emareh* mansion if she marries the secret suitor intended by her father from amongst 12 men who will propose to her. *Leila* does not know the identity of the man chosen by her father. So these men begin to come to *Shams-ol Emareh* and propose to her. *Leila*, the daughter of this respected and wealthy family has to get married to inherit this wealth and respect, of course to someone who suits her status and is already chosen by her father. These men come to propose to her one after another and she needs to choose. This is the only way of keeping the family heritage, the *Shams-ol Emareh*. Each one of the men who come to propose to her are welcomed to stay in the mansion for several days so *Leila* will be able to evaluate the different aspects of the suitor's life and personality and discover whether he is the chosen person so that marrying him will lead to inheriting the mansion. In order to get well acquainted, they have to talk to each other. This kind of dating is done in *Shams-ol*

Emareh and under the supervision of her aunt, *Shamsi*. Along with these proposals, the main characters of the story get involved in evaluating these men. All of this is happening while *Leila* had decided to go and live abroad before the death of her father, but the turn of events have dissuaded her from her decision.

Episodes of the series include meeting sessions and evaluation of the people who propose to *Leila*. Only six of the 12 men who were supposed propose to *Leila* actually get a chance to do so as *Leila* ends up marrying the seventh man and inherits *Shams-ol Emareh* and forgets about going abroad. The seventh man is *Sepehr Parsa*, the son of *Farrokh*. *Farrokh* was the one *Shamsi* as a young lady had been in love with. He was missing for a long time and the mansion's residents did not have any information about him. Watching her aunt's condition deteriorate, *Leila* looks for *Farrokh* to make her aunt feel better. When *Sepehr* and his father come to see *Shamsi*, *Leila* and *Sepehr* fall in love with each other and this mutual affection leads to marriage. The interesting thing is that in examining each of the six previous suitors who had proposed to her, she was highly logical and did not care about love. However, she eventually married the man she really liked. She had reasonable excuses to reject each one of those six people who had proposed to her.

Shahrokh was the first suitor. He obviously suffered from low self-esteem and was constantly joking to conceal this problem. He simply accepted all the demands *Leila* made and proved weak in his relationship with her. This lack of self-esteem or according to *Leila* in the show "lack of masculinity" meaning "surrendering too quickly to the demands of others" discouraged *Leila* from choosing him.

The second man was *Mehran*. Having a poor relationship with his father and viewing his father as a man who had been always been working and had neglected his family, *Mehran* was dependent on his mother too much. After his mother's death, to "alleviate this pain" he took refuge in work and now he is a very successful architect. He is clearly looking for a motherly personality in *Leila* and tries to fulfil the need of having a mother by marrying *Leila*. He is looking to recreate a maternal bond with another woman in his life. *Leila* clearly refuses to take a maternal role in their relationship and believes that *Mehran* should cope better with the trauma of losing his mother. She rejects him too, because she does not want to fulfil a maternal role in a marriage.

The third person is *Behrooz*. As a child, he was *Leila's* playmate and friend. His personality is very much in line with Iranian culture's ideals of masculinity. He is very understanding and supportive. He is very devoted to his friends and as he says, he is willing to even sacrifice his life for them. *Leila* likes this character more than the two previous ones. But in this relationship, *Leila* realises that he is too devoted to his friends that she cannot tolerate this. *Behrooz* himself confesses that he has gone bankrupt two times to help out his friends. She feels insecure about living with him. Although she likes his masculinity, she feels insecure about the decisions *Behrooz* may take in helping his friends and concerned about the crises they may face in their life because of these decisions. When *Leila* wants to respond to his proposal she says, "Your devotion to your friends is beautiful and great, but it belongs to the movies not to real life and puts a marriage in danger".

Peyman is the fourth person. Apparently he is very lively and always craves variety in his life. He has been married once and divorced because of his spirit of variation seeking. He believes that everyone should do whatever they desire with their life, should enjoy every second and not be afraid of the consequences of this style of living. *Peyman's* instability in life and variety seeking and adventurous character is very attractive for *Leila*, but she eventually rejects him because of the same characteristics.

Parham is the fifth suitor. He is educated in Sweden and works there. Since he is Iranian and likes Iranian characteristics, he has returned temporarily to Iran to choose an Iranian wife. He is very lonely in Sweden and living so long there made him behave as the Swedish people do. He is much organised and is indifferent toward emotions. If *Leila* accepts to marry him, she will have to go and live with him in Sweden. This indifference in his characteristic and the boring life that she may have with him and especially living in Sweden, the country she does not like for living, makes her reject him too.

Farhad is the last person who proposes to her. He is a painter, with an artistic and romantic character. He is suffering from a chronic disease, which was supposed to kill him a few years ago. Having a very high spirit and relying on mystical teachings, he has succeeded to defeat the disease; but it may return at any moment. *Farhad* says he would not come forward to propose to her because of his condition if *Leila's* father had not persistently asked him to do so. However, he feels happy proposing and being

there. Because of *Farhad's* condition and uncertainty of the future of the relationship, *Leila* rejects his proposal too. However, *Farhad's* presence in *Shams-ol Emareh*, especially when *Shamsi's* illness gets worse, makes *Shamsi* feel better by seeing him as someone who has beat a fatal disease and he becomes an inspiration for her.

After rejecting all her suitors, *Leila* comes across *Sepehr* while she was looking for *Farrokh* to make her aunt feel better. At the end of the show, there is a scene in which *Farrokh* and *Sepehr* come to *Shams-ol Emareh* to ask her to marry *Sepehr* when *Leila* opens the door for them there is a narration by *Leila* herself which says: "I finally realised that the decision is made by my heart" and she continues by talking about the faith in *Sepehr's* heart. In the meantime, *Farrokh* and *Shamsi* are talking about their own future together and decide to get married with each other. The final scene of the series is the marriage ceremony of *Sepehr* and *Leila* in which *Farrokh* and *Shamsi* are sitting there as a couple too.

There is another side story in the show, which seems important to be mentioned in reviewing the series. It is about *Sharifeh*, the daughter of *Shams-ol Emareh's* caretakers. She is the same age as *Leila* and has a university degree. In the course of the story, a man who is one of the *Shams-ol Emareh's* neighbours proposes to her. He is very suspicious and tries to take advantage of the naivety of *Sharifeh's* father and convince him to let them get married. He is a criminal and goes to jail. Another person who also proposes to *Sharifeh* is the brother of one of her classmates at university. This classmate is unaware of *Sharifeh's* family living conditions. *Sharifeh* is embarrassed to let them come to *Shams-ol Emareh* and visit her family, so she gets a scholarship and decides to leave the country. In the meantime, the brother of *Sharifeh's* friend learns about her living conditions and by stating that his family also does not have better financial status and faith is the most important thing in life, convinces her to marry him. They eventually get married.

In the midst of these proposals in *Shams-ol Emareh*, *Shakour* and *Darya* compare *Leila* and the people who come to propose to her with them, which put them in some marital crises. However, after having a child, *Shakour*, who is now a father, takes more responsibility, which makes his marriage more stable.

Analysis of the “*Shams-ol Emareh*” TV Series

The show clearly aims at discursive articulation of the nodal point of “woman”. It actually tries to make the meaning of the signifier “woman” preferable. This type of representation of a reference for “woman”, begs the question what class of citizens the discourse of the Islamic Republic aims to represent in its preferred subject position regarding the signifier “woman”. It means, firstly I need to investigate what is the structural position that the IRdisc has aimed to prefer its desired meaning regarding signifier of woman. After finding answers for this question, I will focus on the preferred meaning that this series tries to articulate.

Targeted Structural Position of Interpellation

I believe the *Shams-ol Emareh* series has sought more recognition for the logic of difference in hegemonic discourse of the Islamic Republic. The focus of the series is clearly the structural position of the society’s middle class. Choosing the issue of proposing to someone through a traditional ceremony and the manner and style and the reasons for dealing with this issue indicates that the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has targeted urban middle class citizens, particularly Tehranian, as the structural positions that needs to be identified with the ideal subject position of the IRdisc in regard to signifier of woman. This structural position is the same class that the state recognised responsible for the protest movement and consequently the legitimacy crisis. The lifestyle of those who live in *Shams-ol Emareh* is clearly not reflecting the lifestyle of those who are the lower class in Iranian society. The issue of the main character, *Leila*, is the issue of choosing a spouse considering the factors that are common among urban middle class citizens who live in Tehran. Considering the reasons for rejection of each of those who proposed to *Leila* and their social origins, indicate that these factors are both modern and traditional. For example, *Leila*’s reason for rejection of one of the men was not to accept a maternal role in the relationship. She believed that accepting such a role is not ideal in a marriage relationship. In another case, her reason for rejection was the man’s relations with people other than family members, like friends and colleagues. This means that *Leila*’s criteria for marriage and choosing a husband are so modern that they keep her from committing to traditional ones. On the other hand, she does not choose the man who has lived outside of Iran and his behaviour does not comply with Iranian culture

anymore. This is exactly the way that Iranian middle class members identify themselves. Their identity constructed from torn fragments shaped by the interpellation of various and different discourses that represent tradition and modernity. The represented lifestyle in the show and among the residents of the mansion is middle class in such a way that even the wife of the janitor is following the same manners and seeks the same values as the middle class, values in terms of lifestyle, such as using social media or the ways of spending leisure time. The problems that the other couple in the series, *Shakour* and *Darya*, are facing are also the common problems of the middle class such as job prospects and earning more income, having children, mutual understanding in marriage, etc.

In addition, the middle class and its lifestyle is represented in the show as very secular and devoid of any ideology, even not the official ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example, none of the characters of the show has a religious name. Assigning religious names is very common in Iran and can be found in any Iranian family. Although none of the characters of the show has a religious name, there is no bad character in it. There can be some disagreements among the characters, and all the characters of the show are represented not too badly and not too well; rather, the main issue arises where the show does not put any two characters in conflict and does not distinguish between good and bad and is not trying to represent something or someone as true or false (which is very common in producing any TV series in IRIB). Therefore, the series is about lifestyle which is the lifestyle of the secular middle class. Arguably, the structural position that the IRdisc has represented its ideal subject position regarding signifier of woman for them is the middle class. At the same time, this does not mean that the middle class is the only audience. The appeal of the lifestyle of this social class and also fine technical and visual representation of it, has attracted audience from other social classes too.

The main question here is why at this legitimacy crisis of IRdisc, IRIB has undertaken building its desired preferred meaning regarding the “woman” signifier in this lifestyle, while in most productions of IRIB and also the official discourse of the state, this social class and its lifestyle, if not totally blamed, it is definitely ignored.

The discourse, which was experiencing a legitimacy crisis in its preferred meanings, was indeed experiencing dislocation. Making subjects among those who form a

structural position that triggered the existence of a legitimacy crisis in IRdisc is at the heart of the issue here. If the discourse succeeds to match the middle class' preferred meaning of the signifier "woman" on its own, it will be successful in dealing with one of the main signifiers of the discourse of the Islamic Republic which forms its protective belt around the nodal point. And as I said in the methodology chapter, making or emphasising stereotypes for the mentioned signifier (woman), could unite subjects which were different and dissimilar, or were considered as threats for the hegemony of IRdisc in accepting a stereotype regarding this signifier and become homogenous in line with the desire of the IRdisc.

Purpose of Targeting the Middle Class

The series was aired a few months after the events following Iran's presidential election of 2009. The investigation of Iran's official discourse regarding the issue is revealing in that this discourse attributes the protest movement to the middle class. This movement started in Tehran and was just prevalent in Tehran and was present in its middle class, not the low class strata of people. This claim seems viable. Even some of the experts who have discussed the Green Movement believe the movement and its demands were limited to the middle class. Dabashi (2011, p13), for example, suggests that the limitation of demands to middle class and their inability to attract the support of the lower class for the movement, is one of the reasons that has contributed to the weakening and vanishing of this active protest movement. I believe that this inability of the middle class to attract the support of other layers of society has only been magnified by the discourse of the Islamic Republic, an issue that will be discussed later on.

This movement that caused a legitimacy crisis for the IRdisc is so very connected to the middle class that the IRdisc had to recognise this fact. Indeed, the middle class in Iran is often the main driving force for different political, cultural and economic aspects of the country. This, therefore, leads the official discourse of the Islamic Republic to reconsider its approach in dealing with this middle class. This reconsideration definitely did not mean that the discourse of the Islamic Republic accepted the stance of the middle class. Yet, the new articulation of preferred definitions that would directly affect this class and its lifestyle have become the focus of much attention. So

representation of subject positions, which firstly was in line with the discursive articulation of the Islamic Republic and secondly would attract at least some parts of the middle class and would lead them to identify themselves with these subject positions, helped the IRdisc to become more hegemonic. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, recognising the nature of the nodal signifier of the IRdisc, this discourse in crisis conditions tries to reinforce its protective belt around the nodal point in order to avoid dislocation of the meaning of this signifier. The reinforcement of this protective belt during a legitimacy crisis is an effort to remain hegemonic. As also mentioned, the effort to become or remain hegemonic draws on a combination of satisfaction and suppression methods. The reinforcement of the protective belt of the nodal signifier of discourses in the situation of a legitimacy crisis has become possible by applying either of these two strategies. Suppression method leads to elimination and, in discursive terms, the building of a constitutive outside force. And the satisfaction method requires more acceptance of the logic of difference within the discourse.

Hegemonic discourses are always trying to hide existing differences in their field of discursivity. Although it is possible for hegemonic discourses to admit that there are some differences in their defined field of discursivity, they also try to represent this field as a homogenous whole. The field of discursivity in this sense can be considered as the influence sphere of each discourse. The hegemonic discourse tries to homogenise its field of influence by creating a “chain of equivalence”. The chain of equivalence means that in the articulation process, main signifiers with still hegemonic meanings are combined with other signs in this chain and stand against threatening the other (De Vos, 2003, p105).

Nevertheless, emphasising the plurality feature of society and stressing differences between social groups or structural positions causes the destruction of the chain of equivalence. The existence of differences and emphasising plurality in social realm is called the “logic of difference” in Laclau and Mouffe discourse theory. The “logic of difference” emphasises the existence of differences and social boundaries between structural positions within a society. In contradiction, the hegemonic discourse emphasises the chain of equivalence and tries to reduce distinctions between social structural positions. It places part of them in its articulation to integrate them against

“the other”. Therefore, existing distinctions among structural positions will be forgotten and all of them dissolve in the meaning system of hegemonic discourse by identifying themselves with subject positions that have been represented linked to their structural positions (Smith, 1998, p89).

It is worth mentioning here that a hegemonic discourse never tries to show that there are no differences in its field of discursivity. To some extent all hegemonic discourses accept the logic of difference. As I have mentioned, the existence of distinctions among social structural positions and consequently subject positions that occupy structural positions is really important for a discourse. This is because according to distinctions and differences, a discourse starts to make otherness and fixes and establishes itself. However, the question is what a hegemonic discourse does regarding the differences which are not threatening the legitimacy and hegemony of that discourse? Is the hegemonic discourse emphasising on differences and distinctions just in order to make “otherness” for its subjects? Or does the hegemonic discourse also take advantage of differences in its articulation and being hegemonic?

In a particular hegemonic discourse, it is possible to find signifiers, which have different and dissimilar significance. For instance, the meaning of signifiers in sport or entertainment is not the same by all subjects of the IRdisc. Although it is possible that subjects of a hegemonic discourse have different preferred meanings according to a particular signifier, they are not identifying themselves as alternatives for the hegemonic discourse. And also, the hegemonic discourse doesn’t consider them as the others and doesn’t ignore or suppress them.

Even the hegemonic discourse may provide situations for different groups to justify their preferred meaning regarding particular signifiers. This could happen for two reasons. First, those signifiers, which are floating signifiers and haven’t been transformed to moments in the hegemonic discourse articulation, are far from the nodal point in the hegemonic articulation. This means that the importance of signifiers for hegemonic discourse is relevant to their distance from the nodal point. When the meaning of a signifier is far from the meaning of the nodal point, the hegemonic discourse does not try to definitely mean that signifier. A hegemonic discourse prefers meanings for signifiers when other possible meanings threaten the preferred meaning of the nodal point. Or different possible meanings for a floating signifier cause

disruption in the articulation process. Whatever alternative meanings for a floating signifier are closer to the nodal point, the hegemonic discourse attempts more for preferring its ideal meaning. And also, there is then less tolerance in facing alternative meanings.

Second, competition among social groups on meanings of floating signifiers, which are far from the nodal point regarding their meanings, will increase the level of satisfaction among subjects. This kind of competition reinforces this feeling for subjects that they have freedom of choice in preferring their own meanings. This feeling of freedom satisfies subjects of hegemonic discourse in sense of their involvement in social matters. Having freedom of choice in preferring meanings for floating signifiers far from the nodal point causes the naturalisation of hegemonic discourse's preferred meanings regarding its moments. Because subjects don't understand that some meanings are induced to them, since they feel the freedom of choice and satisfaction.

Therefore, the aim of the IRdisc in addressing the structural position of middle class is more recognition of the logic of difference and building a chain of equivalence with regards to these differences in order to make a meaning preferred regarding a signifier which is more important for this discourse rather than signifiers which have caused the emergence of a logic of difference. This means that the chain of equivalence by recognition of the logic of difference among its subjects (by recognition of middle class lifestyle) is working in the favour of the IRdisc in making a stereotype in regard to one of the signifiers that is close to the nodal point of this discourse or ensure that this nodal point will not be dislocated. Identifying with this represented stereotype by various and different subject among the targeted structural position, will strengthen the chain of equivalence and consequently the hegemony of the IRdisc.

I will continue by discussing the preferred meaning (stereotype) of the show and also of the IRdisc for the signifier "woman".

Preferred Meanings and Ideal Subject Positions of "*Shams-ol Emareh*"

Shams-ol Emareh series and the discourse that this series has tried to articulate are formed around the nodal signifier of "woman". As mentioned before, the series is trying to make a meaning preferable among all the potential meanings that the signifier of woman could get. And also this preferred meaning has been represented in

this TV series in order to make the middle class of urban citizens as subjects for the IRdisc. Recognising this class of society as it is done in the show by the IRIB could be interpreted as acceding to the official voice of the state's discourse.

Considering the Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis and the fact that the nodal signifier is mainly an empty signifier with its features, I am going to present the signifiers that this TV series has tried to highlight in order to make its desired meaning regarding the signifier of woman.

Marriage and Proposal

One of the possible closest meanings of the nodal signifier (woman) in the discourse of the show is "marriage". *Leila* is a girl who has to make a right choice in marriage to inherit the mansion, which is her family heirloom. The whole narration of the TV series is based on conditions that may lead to a successful marriage. The main concern of all main female characters of the TV series is marriage and finally all of them find marriage as the way that makes them happy. *Shamsi*, *Leila*, *Sharifeh* and *Pari*, single females of the narration, who had different concerns during the narration, like going abroad to continue their education, illness and loneliness, get married at the end. In the final episode of the show all of them are happy and the reason of this happiness is their marriage, not any other condition that can indicate any independency in reaching happiness for women of the show. Also the main concern of *Darya*, which was her unhappy marriage with *Shakour*, has been fixed. *Darya*, at the end of the show, is carrying her child and has found happiness in fixing her marriage with *Shakour* who was rejecting the responsibilities of the "ideal marriage" in supporting his wife, financially and emotionally. Therefore, it can be said that in this series, the main meaning that accordingly clarifies the ideal position of women is marriage, since not only the main concern of all female characters of the show is marriage but also at the end what could make them happy was their marriage. Women of the series, at the end, are dependent women who when were single had lots of concerns and difficulties but their marriage makes them happy regardless of any other factors that could make them happy and also independent like higher education, having a job, earning money, and so on.

Accordingly, the other signifier that its meaning clarifies the ideal type of marriage is “proposal”. The narration of the TV series has been based on proposing to *Leila*. Reasons that *Leila* uses to reject various proposals, clarifies the criteria that could lead to the ideal type of marriage for women who belong to the middle class structural position. During *Leila*’s conversations with the men who proposed to her, except for *Sepehr* who she eventually marries, *Leila* is always trying to get them to agree with some privileges, such as working outside of the house and going abroad. But she finally realises that none of these privileges are enough for her to marry someone. At the end of the series, when *Leila* gets acquainted with *Sepehr* and marries him, during a narration she says, *“The wedding gift that Shamsi has given me is the mansion. I have eventually realised that the only thing I was required to do to inherit the house was to get married, not to someone who was pre-picked for me. All the communication with the people who came to propose to me was like a journey for me. A journey that increased my experience, and gaining these experiences let me to make a right choice, Sepehr Parsa. My partner is a man who is a true believer in God and this encourages me to live with him”*. She continues by saying that choices made based on other criteria will be unstable and wrong, criteria like money and beauty. It can be said that the journey that *Leila* has passed, eventually led to her marriage with somebody who truly believes in God. Beside the narration of the series that represent the various session of proposing to *Leila*, in order to emphasise on the need of having proposal sessions in the house, under supervision of other members of the family, the criteria of the ideal marriage have also been clarified in this show. Reasons that *Leila* rejected men who proposed to her were: lack of masculinity, rejecting to play maternal role in the marriage, having over relations with friends, having an adventurous character, living abroad and illness. All mentioned factors are factors that may put dependency of *Leila* to her husband at risk. Therefore, although the main factor that accordingly *Leila* accepted to marry *Sepehr* was his believing in God, but actually the main reason was finding nothing in him that may put *Leila*’s dependency to him at risk. In continuation, I will elaborate the main factor that causes demanding this dependency in the show.

House

The other signifier that the series tries to highlight in order to establish its preferred meaning regarding signifier of woman is the signifier of "house". Throughout the show we see that *Shams-ol Emareh* becomes a shelter for those who are looking for stability and peace, and the only reason that this mansion turns to such a place is that it is protected by the woman who owns the place. All main characters of the TV series somehow feel comfortable in the mansion and all problems that they had, have been solved in the mansion by the mediation of the keeper of the mansion who is a woman, namely *Shamsi*. At one point of the show, *Hormoz*, *Leila's* uncle says that he is tired of traveling and instability and needs to stay somewhere so he has come back to *Shams-ol Emareh*. He continues: "*a house that is maintained by a woman is the warmest and most comfortable place in the world*".

During the TV series, the relation between *Leila* and the mansion has changed, at the beginning of the series the relationship between *Leila* and the mansion was nothing but inheriting the mansion by making the right choice in her marriage. But the young and beautiful woman in the show who at the beginning of the show wants to improve and continue her studies and go and live abroad, and could be considered as an independent woman, at the end of the story, finds herself utterly satisfied with inheriting the mansion and having been married with a man who is a true believer in God. Nonetheless the question is how a married woman can be related to a house and sees this place as her comfort zone. Relating "marriage" to "house" and seeing the house as the main realm where women belong in the show, indicates the main role that a woman can get in a house, namely being a mother. The role of motherhood has been considered as the role that relates a woman to a house.

At one point in the series, *Darya*, *Pari's* daughter, realises that her mother has fallen in love with *Hormoz*, complains to her and reminds her of her failed marriages. *Pari* who eventually falls in love with *Hormoz*, has been married and divorced three times. In response to her daughter, *Pari* accepts her previous mistakes and says that she has sought personal gain in all of the previous marriages, but this time wants to be the "housewife", meaning a housewife who is a mother. Actually, *Pari* believes that giving priority to being a wife and a mother and acceptance of these roles by a woman will stabilise her life and after all the adventures in her previous relationships, she has

concluded that being a housewife is the ultimate desire she has always wanted to fulfil.

The final sequence of *Shams-ol Emareh* depicts *Leila* writing to her son a letter, through which the way the story is narrated. A letter that she is writing to her 1 year old son and explaining how she has passed all the ups and downs in making a decision to get her where she is now, namely a mother in a house that she loves. In fact, the story by relating the signifier of woman to two signifiers of “marriage” and “house” denies all the possible meanings it could have given to the signifier of woman and existed in the field of diversity of urban middle class citizens of Tehran and chooses a “mother-wife” meaning (stereotype) for this signifier which may be achieved through marriage. At the end, *Leila* is nothing more than a wife and/or a mother, a mother who wants “to make *Shams-ol Emareh* a home for all the children who are orphaned.” Therefore, the mansion which was considered as an economic capital by *Leila* at the beginning of the show, eventually becomes for her a place that has to be kept in order to raise children in it.

Conclusion

In fact, I believe the meaning that the series is trying to make preferable regarding the signifier of woman, is to reduce the role of women to solely being a wife and a mother and emphasise on the stereotypical role of women. This stereotype as the ideal subject position of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman, has been represented for the structural position of the middle class by highlighting the two signifiers in relation to the ideal subject position of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman. These two are:

- 1) Marriage: as the only way that finally can make females happy with their life.
- 2) House: as the sphere of women’s prosperity for being mothers.

Even the lifestyle which is recognised by IRIB in this series and presented in the show as the middle class lifestyle integrated with modern elements, but the role of women and its meaning is formed around her relation with a man and a house more than anything else. This could be interpreted as emphasising on a chain of equivalence.

CONDITION WHITE (*VAZIYAT-E SEFID*) TV SERIES

This TV series contains 42 episodes and has been aired from network Three of IRIB, which is known also as the “Youth Channel” (*Shabake-ye Javan*), from November 2011 to March 2012.

Synopsis of “Condition White” TV Series

The series “Condition White” narrates a story of a large family where all members have to live together for a while. The narration of the story begins in February 1988 when the Iraqi Baathist army had started launching missiles at the Iranian capital, Tehran, during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. It finishes in September 1988 when the war ends with the adoption of UN Resolution 598. The story begins when the mother of the family who lives in a garden in a village near Tehran, comes to Tehran to visit her children and goes to their houses one by one. During these visits, the viewer realises the critical situation of the relationships among the family members. Almost all the siblings are angry at each other and complain about each other to their mother. A few days when the visiting ends and she returns to the garden, the missile strikes by the Baathist army begin. *Amir*, one of her grandsons, asks all the family members to go to the garden to avoid any possible danger of missile strikes, because it is safer than the city and all the siblings of this large family along with various in-laws and their children go to stay in the grandmother’s garden. The grandmother’s garden is very big and all the family members temporarily take up residency in it. The members of this large family are two sisters and four brothers and all of them are married and have children. The oldest brother is called *Bahram*. He is not angry with any sibling but cannot reconcile them. He inherited his late father’s job and owns a greenhouse in Tehran. His wife’s name is *Eftekhar* and they have two children named *Amir* and *Monireh*. *Amir* is a 16 year old teenager and *Monireh* is approximately 20 years old. *Ahmad* is *Monireh*’s husband and is a bank employee and has gone to the front several times. The second brother is called *Bijan*. He works in Tehran bazar (*Bazar-e Tehran*) and is in the import-export business. The war condition destroyed his financial situation and left him indebted to some people. *Sima*, his wife, is clearly suffering from a mental health problem and is severely depressed. Their children are *Shahnaz*, *Shahram* and *Shahrooz*. *Shahnaz* is a 16 years old girl and *Shahram* is a 6 year old boy. *Shahrooz* is a 17 years old teenager who has been staying in the garden before others. He has now

reached the age of conscription and has fled to garden to avoid going to the war front and wants to flee the country. *Bijan*, his father, also wants to help him flee to another country to avoid the compulsory military service.

Behzad is another son of the family. He is a civil servant. He has a wife named *Mahnaz* and a little girl named *Sanaz*. *Behrooz* is another brother. He is jobless and an addict and his financial condition is worse than the others. His wife is named *Manijeh* who is pregnant. The girls of the family are *Ehteram* and *Mohtaram*. *Ehteram* lives in a very luxurious house in Tehran. Her husband, who is a great businessman, is in jail for financial crimes and hoarding during wartime. The rest of the family thinks that he is out of the country. *Faraz* and *Naser* are *Ehteram*'s grandsons. *Faraz* is a young man who has a shop in Tehran and is in love with *Shahnaz*, *Bijan*'s daughter. *Naser* is also a young man who has a physical disability and is not able to walk or speak properly, but he has full comprehension. *Homayoon* is *Ehteram*'s son and comes to the garden for a short time. He wants to borrow money from the residents of the garden so he can work with someone else. *Hooshang* is *Mohtaram*'s husband. He owns a laundry in Tehran and seems wiser than the rest of the family. He likes poetry and takes a reasonable position in all critical situations. This couple has two children named *Reza* and *Mina*. *Reza* is a 16 year old boy and *Mina* is a girl of the same age. *Ehteram* and *Mohtaram* have problems with each other. *Mohtaram* believes that *Ehteram* is wealthy and so she does not respect others. *Ehteram* is also angry with *Bijan*. They have so many problems that *Bijan* says that they are not brother and sister anymore. *Behzad* and *Behrooz* are angry at each other too. Because *Behrooz* believes not having a home is the reason for all his financial problems. He used to live in their family house in Tehran, but *Behzad* sold it. *Behzad* who is married to a wealthy girl employed by the government, considers himself a better person than *Behrooz* who is jobless and an addict. There is also another family that has come to the garden. *Abbas* is a middle-aged man who is a family friend. Since *Shirin*, his teenage daughter is afraid of the missile strikes in Tehran and he does not know any place out of the city except for this garden, he asks the grandmother to let them temporarily live there and she accepts. There is a school near the garden, which is turned into a shelter for those who have lost their houses in the war.

At the beginning, *Abbas'* family could take a room in this school. Afterwards, since *Mohtaram* and *Ehteram* have had a quarrel and could not tolerate each other, *Mohtaram's* family moves to this room and *Abbas's* family goes to the garden.

The protagonist of this series is *Amir*, *Bahram's* son, who advances the narration. *Amir*, a 16 year old is not taken seriously by the other members of the family. He is even called "*Mad Amir*" by some. In fact, "*Condition White*" is narration of a slice of *Amir's* life. Sometimes, the story is advanced by him and some other times he is the spectator who observes the incidents of the garden. Thus, the plot is the story of crises and dilemmas of *Amir's* life in this period, while marginal stories of other members of the family are taking place.

Condition White has no linear plot in narrating the story. In fact, the aim of this series is to represent the atmosphere of life during the 60s (1981-91 in the Gregorian calendar) and wartime in Iran. This has been done very well and every detail of life in that time has been reconstructed in an excellent way. At the end, all family members reconcile and reach 'condition white'.

Analysis of "Condition White" TV Series

Prior to my analysis of the series and a search for its meanings, which this series is trying to make them preferred, it is necessary to answer the question about the aimed structural position of this product. In other words, which structural position of the society is aimed by the IRdisc to interpellate according preferred meanings of this TV series?

Targeted Structural Position of Interpellation

As mentioned, the plot occurs in the last years of the 60s and the last year of war between Iran and Iraq. I have discussed the 60s and the qualities that have made it different to other decades of the Islamic Republic discursive hegemony, in the chapter on the television discourse. Therefore, as elaborated, the main indicator of this differentiation is the war between Iran and Iraq in this decade. War affected every aspect of life during the 60s. In this chapter, the relationship of the official discourse of the Islamic Republic with the Iran-Iraq war and the representation, which is preferred, by this hegemonic discourse has been discussed.

One of the main indicators of this official representation is the way that ordinary people relate to the war. In fact, ordinary people who did not choose to go to the war front are mostly represented as self-involved parasites who only care about their own interests. These people had always been particularly ignored in the official representation of Islamic Republic or evaluated as inferior citizens compared to those who had gone to the front.

In *Condition White*, similar to *Shams-ol Emareh*, we notice the acceptance of the logic of difference in the official discourse of the Islamic Republic. In the narration of this period of life in a normal family during the last days of war, none of the family members (except for one) is involved directly with the war. It is worth mentioning that many of soldiers taking part in the war were volunteers and that is why the official voice of Islamic Republic has always tried to represent the ones who did not choose the war as their priority in life as “Others”.

The reason I claim that this series is a step towards acceptance of the logic of difference, lies in the fact that this series narrates the life of a family during war as none of the family members experience the war directly, while before, the narrations of war were exclusive to the heroism and stories of veterans that took part in the war. Moreover, each of these characters (while their lives are affected by the war) are following their own lives and personal struggles. The protagonist is obsessed with love, earthly love, which is not much acclaimed in the ideological discourse of the Islamic Republic. *Bijan* has money issues and has a relationship with a woman other than his wife. *Behzad*'s main concern is to get promoted in his office and *Bahram* is engaged with his work, cultivation of flowers and plants. The grandmother, who is the charismatic character of the series, is merely worried to bring peace back to her family. Although the interesting point is that none of them are represented as bad or wicked characters. Similar to *Shams-ol Emareh*, all characters are grey and you can sympathise with any of them. At the end of the day, it can be said that *White Condition* is recognition of voices that chose to live a normal life during the 60s.

The lifestyle represented in this series is the lived experience of the middle class during the wartime. The director has tried to represent this lifestyle perfectly via detailed images of life for this class that mostly did not participate in war but lived a normal life, though affected by war. This group indeed seemed classified as inferior in the official

discourse of the Islamic Republic, compared to soldiers and heroes who attended the front. The question that intrigues me is why this recognition occurred while the Islamic Republic faced a legitimacy crisis? The reason seems to be the preference of some meanings among middle class subjects of the IRdisc, in order to survive the legitimacy crisis. Thus, preferring the meaning that this series has represented would reinforce the safety belt of the IRdisc and secures it against the crisis.

Purpose of Targeting the Middle Class

As I explored in Chapter Three, the 60s is of most vital concern in the Islamic Republic's history. The signifiers that historically emerged in this period make this decade vital for the existence of IRdisc. The signifier of war and the charismatic leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini is one of the most important of these signifiers which is very close to the safety belt of the nodal point of the IRdisc and moreover, has given meaning to it.

During the course of legitimacy crisis in the discourse of the Islamic Republic, one of the most important struggles was to redefine the signifiers, which were emerged objectively in the 60s, and to bring their values back. The struggle to make signifiers such as charismatic leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini and war, of their own by the opposition of the Islamic Republic on the one hand and the efforts of official discourse of the Islamic Republic to articulate its preferred meanings regarding these signifiers on the other hand, are struggles that create a situation for both sides to prove them historically.

As said previously, Fazeli (2012) believes that three characteristics make this decade unique compared to the other times of Islamic Republic governance. These are social cohesion, ideological excitation and richness of meanings. Simply, it can be asserted that each discursive opposition forces, either IRdisc in its legitimacy crisis, or the opposition forces trying to disarticulate the preferred discursive meanings of the Islamic Republic, could win the discursive struggle over the legacy of the 60s. If each is able to make subjects regarding their preferred meanings related to these three matters and the 60s that one will be the winner.

There would be such opportunity for the IRdisc to articulate its discursive preferred meanings over these characteristics, if it could make the subject to construct nostalgia. Here, nostalgia means preferring the meaning of the 60s in a way to recall it as

beautiful and glamorous. Thus, the discourse should be able to present notions of social cohesion, ideological excitement and richness of meanings as beautiful notions related to the past and lost today. The idea is to make the subjects sadly miss the beautiful situation they lived in before. Therefore, the minds of these subjects would reach the same historical longing through an abstract point and secure the discourse against the collapse and deconstruction of its preferred meanings.

On the contrary, if the opposition could present the emergence of these notions in the social sphere to be concurrent with oppression of the opposition or marginalisation of a large group of people, they could resist this abstract connection of minds and secureness in the IRdisc.

Skilful reconstruction of life situations of the 60s and perfect utilisation of objects and images specific to this decade in *Condition White*, unconsciously revives the memories of those who have lived it. Moreover, the form of narration and the glamorisation of signifiers of the 60s can provoke those who have not lived it to regret not experiencing its beauty and develop a sense of longing and nostalgia. It should be noted that the period in which the story is told, and when it ends in the summer of 1988, is when the Islamic Republic is defining the “other” in the harshest terms. In summer 1988, more than 1,500 political prisoners were suddenly sentenced to death by a revolutionary court and were executed in large groups. Most were leftist and had an important role in the victory of Iran’s Islamic revolution of 1979. Still, the question we are contemplating is not the objective situation of the 60s, but rather the preferred meaning of the IRdisc of subjects about this decade.

Moreover, as argued in the theoretical chapter, a myth to become pervasive and transform the social imagination has to go beyond existing social demands and needs. It has to be presented in idealistic, authentic and metaphoric forms. Therefore, a discourse can show itself as the general and universal discourse, which can respond to all existing social demands and desires if subjects accept its ideal social imagination (Laclau, 1990, p62). Through creating myths and expanding social imaginations, the point that the hegemonic discourse could not represent all social classes and groups and respond to their demands and desires will remain hidden if subjects accept the created social imagination. Therefore, presenting myths is a strategy for naturalisation. The preferred meanings and current situation and objective circumstances of the

hegemonic discourse that has faced crisis needs this strategy.

The emerging discourses, existing discourses or dominant discourses in order to be hegemonic have to represent themselves as the unique salvation for existing crises. Myths are becoming social imaginations by embodying metaphoric, authentic and idealistic situations. There is always an unfilled gap between objective situation of the social realm and represented ideal forms of the society. This gap provides situation for emergence of new discursive articulations and new myths. In Jorgensen and Phillips's point of view the role of the discourse analysis is to: *"One aim of discourse analysis is to pinpoint and analyse the myths of society as objective reality that are implied in talk and other actions. How it is that some myths come to appear objectively true and others as impossible is a central question."* (2002, p40).

Preferred Meanings and Ideal Subject Positions of the Condition White

If we return to the three characteristics that Fazeli mentions as the most important about the 60s, we can claim that "Condition White" attempts artfully to distinguish two of these three characteristics and beautify the everyday life of that time through representing a myth of existence of social cohesion and richness of meaning during the 60s.

Social Cohesion

Basically, the series is a narration of a family that has lost their cohesion and most of them are not on talking terms with each other. Though, the bombardment of Tehran and the mode of life in the 60s makes them all reunite and find their lost cohesion. Furthermore, there are the same cohesive aspects amongst the family and evacuees sheltered in the school: financial and material aid they give is a symbol of collective spirit leads to social cohesion. The only person in the series about whom we hear much, but he is always absent as he is in prison, is *Ehteram's* husband. His crime is hoarding during wartime and his absence is due to his confrontation against this collective spirit and pursuing personal gain. In sum, a family that was about to collapse, due to the war is forced to live beside each other and the lifestyle that has been formed as a result of the emergency situation of bombardment, causes them to find cohesion. As said in the synopsis of the TV series, all siblings of the family were angry with each other. Nevertheless, at the end of the series all of them reconcile. Signs of

this reconciliation are marriage of *Shahnaz* and *Faraz*, daughter of *Bijan* and grandson of *Ehteram* who were angry with each other more than other siblings. Additionally, *Ehteram* helps *Behrooz* to quit using drugs and also helps him financially to be able to rent a decent place for his family after he became a father. *Behzad* and *Behrooz* who were struggling over their father's legacy, reconcile after *Behrooz* saved *Behzad's* life when he was stuck in his apartment after a bombardment. *Ehteram* and *Mohtaram* also reconciled eventually due to *Hooshang's* emphasises on their misunderstanding of each other.

The last scene of the TV series is the *Faraz* and *Shahnaz* wedding near the grandmother's garden. Everyone reunites and has passed their crises. War made the family stable, and after the red condition of war, the family finally reaches the white condition. This colour coding system was used during the wartime to signal the threat level. As mentioned, the narration of this series is full of marginal stories which express the atmosphere of life in the 60s, but arguably the main point of the narration is about the reconciliation of family members.

Richness of Meaning

It can be asserted that one more thing that the series was successful in approaching is richness of meanings of the 60s. The way that *Amir's* love is narrated and basically, the perfect narration of earthly love, which has affected *Amir*, makes the audience sympathise. He is a simple character, with no complexity. This is attractive for the audience. He has no pride or grudge. He is the reminder of honesty, passion and simplicity, which is lost for many living in current times, facing different problems of life. Although there are also other signs in the series for highlighting the richness of meanings during the 60s like the concept of martyrdom for *Ahmad* who is going to the frontline or the gathering of humanitarian aid for the frontline in the school, but I claim that richness of meanings and nostalgia for these meanings is illustrated in *Amir's* character. As the protagonist, he makes the most humanistic and moral position against incidents and his vain love makes nostalgia of meanings of life in youth. Images and objects that *Amir* uses during the series are particular to the 60s, simple toys of that time, a bullet turned to a pen, pictures of martyrs, etc. And this is a trick to

deepen the connection of the lifestyle of the 60s with meanings which *Amir* represents, especially his pure love to *Shirin*.

From the first moment that *Amir* sees *Shirin*, he falls in love with *Shirin*, *Abbas's* daughter. He neither has the courage to express his love, nor can he manage his behaviour so others do not realise his affection for *Shirin*. He also cannot make *Shirin* notice him. Therefore, in order to attract her attention, he behaves in foolish ways, which make him look even more insane. When the family realises his love, everybody tries to dissuade him. What *Amir* does to show off, hurts *Shirin* and when *Monireh* – *Amir's* sister pities and seeks to help *Amir* by talking to *Shirin* to convince her to marry *Amir*, we understand that *Shirin* really hates *Amir*.

Afterwards, *Amir* develops some mental illness similar to Schizophrenia. He always has a delusion of *Shirin* who talks to him, while she is miserable because of what he is doing. Most parts of the narration are devoted to the mental conflicts of *Amir*. First, *Amir* falls in love and does foolish things to express his love, then, when he hears *Shirin's* refusal, he breaks down and falls into madness, till the time he manages to forget his love and pay attention to more important matters such as his education. Narrating *Amir's* love in the series is done in a way that contains elements of pure love without any expectation. *Amir* actually sacrifices his honour and pride in loving *Shirin*. Also he wants to sacrifice his life to prove his maturity to *Shirin*, by going to the front and becoming a martyr in the war. In a very effective scene when *Amir* is praying, he suddenly abandons the formal way of praying and starts talking to God in a very informal language. He addresses God and asks for help in order to overcome his love and stresses: *"My dear God, I know I am going insane and I bother everyone, but I have no choice, I faced a condition that I haven't faced before and I don't know how I can deal with this condition, everyone asks me to be wise and rational, I want to do so, but I simply can't, you need to help me deal with this situation"*.

Amir's love, madness, veracity, humility, altruism and honesty, alongside his brilliant characterisation by the writer and the director, arguably cause that *Amir* as the main character of the series, becomes the symbol of richness of meaning through the years that the show represents.

Ideological Excitation

Although, the other characteristic of this decade, namely ideological excitation, is not much addressed in “Condition White”, but obviously it does not have a negative message against it. Since the aimed audience of the series is middle class who were the driving force of protest, addressing the ideological notions which historically have emerged in the 60s could have resulted in deepening the gap between this class and the IRdisc. Thus, to avoid addressing this gap, the series does not mention ideological notions much. The question of the series is the life style leading to social cohesion, therefore, to highlight cohesion and downplay the gap, ignores the ideological excitation, though there is no objection to the dominant ideology of the 60s.

Conclusion

Altogether, Condition White attempts to beautify the lifestyle of the 60s and to reconstruct the link between the audience and this decade in an aesthetic way by representing a myth of social cohesion and richness of meaning during the 60s.

The preferred meanings the series is trying to articulate and make audience to identify with; are formed in relation to the signifier of the 60s and its lifestyle in order to create a social imagination and naturalise the current conditions of the IRdisc. It seems that notions elaborated by Fazeli (2012), except ideological excitation, are preferred meanings of the 60s represented in “Condition White” in order to build a myth regarding signifiers of the 60s. Undoubtedly, what IRdisc prefers, is a nostalgic and longing look to these meanings. If the subjects identify in such a way with these meanings, then, it helps the IRdisc to unite the subject in a historical though abstract point (myth), which prevents its discourse from experiencing legitimacy crisis.

MUKHTAR NAMEH (THE BOOK OF MUKHTAR) TV SERIES

Mukhtar Nameh was broadcast from October 2010 to July 2011, by Channel One or the “National Channel” (*Shabake-ye Melli*) in 40 episodes.

Synopsis of “*Mukhtar Nameh*” TV Series

Mukhtar Nameh is about a man named *Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi*, who sought to establish a Shiite and Alawi (in reference to *Ali*, the first Shiite Imam) state in order to avenge the

killing of *Imam Hussein*, the third Shiite Imam, killed by *Yazid*, the Umayyad Caliph, in the *Ashura*¹² incident.

The Narration begins when *Hassan*, the second Shiite Imam, accepts the peace agreement with *Muawia*, the first Umayyad Caliph and *Yazid's* father. He travels to Iraq and resides in the governor of Iraq's palace (who is *Mukhtar's* uncle). *Mukhtar* who used to be a skilled warrior prior to his father's death by the Iranian army, drops war and politics and instead works as a farmer. As *Hassan* enters *Al-Mada'in*, the capital of the Iraqi province, *Mukhtar's* uncle asks *Mukhtar* to take on the duty of guarding *Hassan*. *Hassan's* spouse poisons and kills *Hassan*, and thus *Mukhtar* goes back to farming.

The narration cuts forward to "20 years later", when *Muawia* is dead and *Hussein* seeks to establish a Shiite state. In order to do so, he decides to leave *Madina* (in current Saudi Arabia) for *Kufa* (in current Iraq) as the people of *Kufa* have sent him many letters inviting him there. To consider the situation, *Hussein* sends an ambassador to *Kufa* and when he approves the situation for a Shiite state, *Hussein* leaves *Madina*. While *Hussein* is on his way, the situation changes in *Kufa*. The new governor, *Ibn-e Ziyad* spreads fear in the city, kills *Hussein's* ambassador and thus, ruins the setting for the Shiite state in *Kufa*. Then he sends *Mukhtar*, as one of the most important supporters of *Hussein* in *Kufa* to prison.

Ibn-e Ziyad sends an enormous army to fight *Hussein*. They encircle *Hussein* on his way to *Kufa* and kill him and his supporters. Later, *Mukhtar* is released. He departs for Mecca, which is under the rule of *Aal-e Zubayr* (descendants of *Zubayr*). *Abdullah Ibn-e Zubayr* is a son to one of the prophet's companions who claims a caliphate in Mecca and fights *Yazid*. *Mukhtar* joins him as he claims one of the reasons for his rebellion is the killing of *Hussein*. In the middle of this rebellion, *Yazid* dies and *Mukhtar* realises that *Ibn-e Zubayr* has no intention to avenge the killing of *Hussein*. He then decides to return to *Kufa* and establish a Shiite state there.

¹² According to Shiite Islam, *Ashura* is the day of the martyrdom of *Hussein ibn Ali*, the grandson of *Muhammad* at the Battle of *Karbala* on 10 *Muharram* in the year 61 AH (10 October 680 CE). *Hussein* refused to give an oath of allegiance to *Yazid*, the second Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate and revolted against him. In *Hussein's* view, *Yazid* was corrupt and his rule was against the spirit of Islam according to the Prophet. *Hussein* and his supporters (including his infant child) were killed in the Battle of *Karbala* on *Ashura* Day. Mourning for *Hussein* and his companions is one of the most significant Shiite traditions and it is commemorated every year.

Meanwhile a group of Shiite Muslims from *Kufa* who could not attend the battle of *Karbala* revolt in *Kufa*. Their names are the *Tawwabeen* (penitents) as they believed they committed the sin of inviting *Hussein* to *Kufa* and then leaving him on his own. *Mukhtar* does not accompany them as he thinks that they do not have a proper approach for revenge and what they do is sentimental. In *Mukhtar's* opinion, the first step to avenge the killing of *Hussein* is to establish a well-found state and then to fight *Hussein's* murderers. However, the *Tawwabeen* prepare a small army and go to fight. They are defeated and are all killed as *Mukhtar* predicted.

In the interim, *Mukhtar* searches for allies among tribes and cities close to *Kufa* to assist him in establishing the new state. He succeeds in bringing many tribes of *Kufa* and its suburb together and gains their trust. At that moment, he declares the uprising. It should be mentioned that among people who support *Mukhtar*, there is an Iranian named *Kian* who accompanies him with an Iranian army. *Kian* is in fact the most trusted companion for *Mukhtar* and is his old friend. Finally, *Mukhtar* conquers *Kufa* and establishes the Shiite state. Then, he goes after *Hussein's* murderers and kills them one by one.

The important issue here is that according to Shiite beliefs, while a Shiite Imam is alive, he is the only one who has legitimacy to establish a state. As an Imam he comes to that position through inheritance. Thus, the descendants of *Fatima*, the Prophet's daughter, and *Ali*, her husband and the first Imam, would be in the position to be Shiite Imams. During *Mukhtar's* time there was a living child of this family. Thus, there are a lot of arguments about the legitimacy of establishing a Shiite state during the lifetime of a Shiite Imam. I will discuss this in the analysis part for this series.

When *Mukhtar* conquered *Kufa* and killed the murderers of *Hussein*, he decided to extend his territory. Hence he enters a war with *Aal-e Zubayr*. *Aal-e Zubayr* has the same intention to extend their territory beyond Mecca and they invade *Kufa* as well. *Mukhtar* loses many of his supporters. Many die, such as *Kian* and his Iranian army and many are seduced by promises of fortune and power given to them by *Aal-e Zubayr* and desert *Mukhtar*. According to the series, one of the most important reasons for the fall of *Mukhtar's* reign is the racial divisions between Persians and Arabs sown by *Aal-e Zubayr* in *Mukhtar's* army. As a result of *Aal-e Zubayr's* deception, Iranians who have a great army would be called as the inferior race and this leads to *Mukhtar's* army

weakening from within. Finally, *Aal-e Zubayr* wins the war and seizes *Kufa*. The last episode of the series is the resistance of *Mukhtar* and his few remaining supporters and at the end, *Mukhtar* is killed in the *Kufa* Mosque, where *Ali*, the first Shiite Imam was martyred.

In a nutshell, the story of *Mukhtar Nameh* is a narration of the life of a man who aims to avenge *Hussein's* blood and establish a Shiite state. Although he manages to do the former, he is prevented by *Aal-e Zubayr's* deception from achieving the latter. He is killed and his Shiite state is destroyed.

Analysis of “*Mukhtar Nameh*” TV Series

Mukhtar Nameh (The Book of *Mukhtar*) is one of the “Accomplished Collections” (*Serial-e Faakher*) of state TV productions. Though, there is not an exact description of “accomplished” and the way these series should be produced, by examining the series that have held this label, it can be understood that some characteristics are similar in these products. The main characteristic is budget. Products that have been labelled “accomplished” by state TV are all “Big Productions” that in comparison to other productions have used much more resources. This grand budget has usually been dedicated to creating huge scenes, with lots of actors and extras, long timing and numerous episodes, vast advertisements and so on. As there is no private channel in Iran and all productions of Iranian state television are financed by the public budget, it is obvious that the content of these big-ticket “accomplished” series is of vital importance. Thus, not only these products are approved by the state, but also the huge budget is allocated to articulate meanings important for the IRdisc. In other words, the meaning articulated should be close to the nodal point of the IRdisc.

Accomplished productions, when compared to other productions of state television, determine that these series mostly contain ideological meanings and attempts to represent subject positions for a larger group of Iranians. For instance, while two other series examined in this research, “*Shams-ol Emareh*” and “*Condition White*”, were critically acclaimed by critics and the state television itself, they cannot be considered as “Accomplished Series”. The budget spent for the series is one of the most important factors. According to the state television website a budget of around US\$15 million has been spent on *Mukhtar Nameh*, while the two other series studied here spent less

than US\$1 million each. The second reason can be detected in the meanings these series are trying to promote. As I studied the two previous series, I concluded that the state television, consciously or unconsciously, is trying to make some meanings preferred among the Iranian middle class. In other words, I have attempted to describe the aim of these series to represent the subject positions for the structural position of middle class. That is not the case in *Mukhtar Nameh*. Unlike the two other series, I cannot say that *Mukhtar Nameh* is aimed at any specific group. Nor can I claim that this series is trying to make any meanings preferred among all subjects of the IRdisc.

It seems that the series is about to give meaning to signifiers, which determine ideological borders of the IRdisc. It means that considering the legitimacy crisis that the IRdisc faced, the preferred meanings of this discourse regarding the existing signifiers in its field of discursivity have been dislocated. As mentioned, this discourse in confrontation with the legitimacy crisis tried to prefer some meanings and articulate its discourse in order to tighten its safety belt for its nodal point. Obviously, meanings that *Mukhtar Nameh* is trying to make preferred are the closest ones to the nodal point of the IRdisc. It does not mean that the IRdisc after experiencing the legitimacy crisis has tried to prefer a specific meaning related to its nodal signifier, but it means that this discourse is seeking to strengthen the mythical and ideological character of its nodal signifier. The mythical character would turn the nodal signifier into an empty signifier, which would be very hard to deconstruct. I will return to this point later and will express my point about giving a mythical character to the nodal signifier of the IRdisc.

Nonetheless, before I start to analyse "*Mukhtar Nameh*" and discover the meanings this series is trying to highlight, it is necessary to find out about the accuracy and authenticity of the historical narration the series presents. There are many narrations of *Mukhtar* and his uprising in Shiite and Sunni history, though I would only approach Shiite narrations, which is dominant in Iran (Iran's official religion being Twelver Shiite). Afterwards, I would discuss the state television narration of *Mukhtar's* uprising and the reason this narration has been chosen.

Historical Narrations about *Mukhtar's* Uprising

There are four main narrations about *Mukhtar* in Shiite history which each has its own historical documents. Examining these documents would be irrelevant to this study; therefore, I would only go for a summary of different approaches to *Mukhtar*.

Some Islamic Historians (*Tarikh Al-Tabari*, Volume 4, p441) believe *Mukhtar* to be a politician who takes the opportunity and use the turmoil caused by *Hussein's* death to establish a state in *Kufa*. They assert that if we go back in *Mukhtar's* life, it would be apparent that he had no claim of being Shiite and that is why his intention to institute the Shiite state was only to get Shiite Muslims to cooperate with him (*Ansab Al-Ashraf*, Volume 5, p214). Thus, according to this approach, he is a politician who succeeds in forming a new state.

In the second group's eyes, *Mukhtar* is a liar (*Al Mosnaf*, Volume 5, p330). As mentioned, according to Shiite beliefs, while a Shiite Imam is alive, he is the only legitimate person who has the right to reign (*Sheikh Horr-e Ameli*, Volume 15, p50 and *Kolleini*, volume 8, p264). Referring to this fact, they believe that *Mukhtar* had no right to revolt and form a state on behalf of a Shiite Imam of his time (*Tarikh Al-Tabari*, Volume 4, p518). In their view, *Mukhtar* did not have any permission given to him by Imam *Sajjad* (the fourth Shiite Imam and *Hussein's* son), and the permission he claimed to own, was forged by him.

The third group goes further and claims that not only he had no such permission, but also he has established a sect with a misconstrued understanding of Islam named *Kaysanites* (*Ansab Al-Ashraf*, Volume 5, pp233, 235, 236). According to this group, *Mukhtar* goes to *Sajjad* to get the permission, but the permission is denied. Therefore, *Mukhtar* goes to *Hussein's* stepbrother and receives permission from him. *Muhammad ibn-e Al-Hanafiah*, the stepbrother, is no Imam for the mainstream Shiite, but *Mukhtar* introduces him as Imam and establish the false (in their view) sect of *Kaysanites*. They state that *Mukhtar* even claimed to be the messianic figure and consider himself as the saviour (*Ibn-e Hazm Al-Andolosi*, Volume 5, p35).

The fourth narration, which is chosen by the Iranian state Television in this series, considers *Mukhtar* as a true Shiite, though he also has his faults (*Al-Khoee*, *Mo'jam Rejal*, *Al-Hadis*, Volume 19, pp105-110 and *Allameh Amini*, *Alghadir*, Volume2 p343). Still, the legitimacy of his uprising and the root of his intentions in Shiite beliefs is of no

question. While they also confirm that *Mukhtar* had no written permission letter from Imam *Sajjad*, but as Imam, they show he had no intention to establish an Islamic state, but instead had approved *Mukhtar's* uprising and had even given prior confirmation and *Muhammad ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* is the one who has delivered this confirmation (*Al-Fotouh*, Volume 5, pp91, 92, 93). In the Series, *Mukhtar* goes to *Ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* and he declares that not only avenging *Hussein's* blood is favourable, but also Imam *Sajjad* has approved it, while there is no historical document of Imam *Sajjad* or *Ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* interference in *Mukhtar's* uprising. In the series, *Mukhtar* comes to Shiite Muslims of *Kufa* with the handwriting of *Muhammad ibn-e Al-Hanafiah*. One of the Shiite Muslims doubts the authenticity of this letter, and so he goes to *Ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* to investigate the honesty of *Mukhtar*. While it is apparent in the series that *Mukhtar* has forged the letter, but *Ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* approves his support of himself and for Imam *Sajjad* of *Mukhtar* and his revolt.

Obviously, the state television has reasons to choose this narration and it seems that the intention could be nothing but to make some meanings preferred in order to protect the hegemonic discourse of the Islamic Republic.

Preferred Meanings and Ideal Subject Positions of the *Mukhtar Nameh*

There are many aspects to criticise *Mukhtar Nameh*. The long timing of the series—40 episodes each an hour long—and its numerous characters and sub-narrations give us a tool to examine the series from different aspects, for instance the series can be reviewed from a feminist or historical angle. Considering the aim of this study in examining the popular series of Iranian state television, it seems that three main meanings are articulated in this series. The understanding of these would help us reach the final aim of this study. I will discuss these three meanings and how they function in making the nodal signifier of the IRdisc secure from being dislocated.

Sovereignty

It seems that the most important meanings this series follows is about the signifier of “sovereignty”. According to Shiite belief, we are now in the era of occultation. This refers to the idea that *Mahdi*, the 12th Imam, is alive but hidden and it is not yet the right time for him to appear and constitute the ultimate Shiite/Islamic state. Shiite

Islam believes that *Mahdi* is going to be the saviour of the world and humanity. When he comes, the world will be full of justice and his sovereignty will be global.

For the time being, the main question is sovereignty in the era of occultation. Some believe that establishing a state in the era of occultation is wrong and this is a right that belongs only to an Imam. It used to be the dominant idea among Shiite clergy before Ayatollah Khomeini, when he brought up the “supreme leadership” (*velayat-e faghih*) theory and stood against the traditional standpoint. According to this theory, a fully qualified jurist has the right to form an Islamic state in the era of occultation and an Islamic state would be meaningful only if a Shiite jurist is head of the state (*Imam Khomeini, Hokoumat-e Eslami*). I do not intend to study Ayatollah Khomeini’s theory, but to point out that forming a state in the era of occultation is a vital meaning targeted by the series.

In *Mukhtar Nameh*, it is presented as Imam *Sajjad* and his uncle, *Muhammad ibn-e Al-Hanafiah* have no confrontation with *Mukhtar* in establishing a state and find him deserving to do so, while it is a very controversial subject in Shiite history. Therefore, the position of *Mukhtar Nameh* regarding the signifier of sovereignty is about its legitimacy in the era of occultation.

It is worth mentioning that in the first half of the series, namely before *Mukhtar* publicised his uprising, *Mukhtar*’s character has been represented as more realistic. It means that in the narration of the series before *Mukhtar*’s uprising, we can see that *Mukhtar* has made some mistakes in his decisions. Even at some points *Mukhtar* character has been represented as a hesitant or ambitious person. For instance, in the first half of the narration of the series, *Mukhtar* refuses to accompany Imam *Hassan* (the second Shiite Imam) to start a battle against *Muawia*. Additionally, *Mukhtar* also refuses to accompany the *Tawwabeen* in their battle, which was initiated by the *Tawwabeen* to avenge Imam *Hussein*’s death. Nonetheless, after *Mukhtar* publicised his uprising to establish his state, no mistakes or any sign of hesitancy or egoism has been represented regarding *Mukhtar*’s character. This could be taken to mean that the head of the Shiite authority in the era of occultation does not make any mistakes.

Insight

The other preferred meaning of the *Mukhtar Nameh* TV series has also been articulated regarding the signifier of sovereignty. However, this preferred meaning has been articulated in a way to clarify the position of the TV series regarding others. In other words, as I have argued in the chapter of methodology, representing the subject position of others can be considered as one of the strategies of representations in order to avoid any identification of the subjects regarding to subject position of others. In the *Mukhtar Nameh* TV series, the fact that *Mukhtar's* companions deserted him in his battle against *Aal-e Zubayr* has been represented as one of the main reasons of the collapse of *Mukhtar's* state. *Mukhtar's* companions, who were helping *Mukhtar* in his uprising and establishing the Shia state, refused to accompany *Mukhtar* in his battle against *Aal-e Zubayr*. This refusal was caused by the conspiracy of *Aal-e Zubayr*. Actually this TV series sees no defect in *Mukhtar's* behaviours that caused dissidence amongst his former companions. However the main cause of this dissidence is represented as divisive acts by *Aal-e Zubayr*. It means that *Aal-e Zubayr* by giving *Mukhtar's* companions the promise of wealth and authority after collapse of *Mukhtar's* state, cause them to abandon *Mukhtar* in his battle against *Aal-e Zubayr*. The main reason of accepting these promises by *Mukhtar's* companions in the series was known as *Mukhtar's* justice. It means that referencing *Mukhtar's* justice by *Aal-e Zubayr*, *Mukhtar's* companions were convinced that in the state that was ruled by *Mukhtar*, they could not reach any authority or wealth. In this series, the conspiracy of the enemy is known as the main cause of enticement of *Mukhtar's* companions and consequently collapse of *Mukhtar's* reign. *Mukhtar's* enemy by emphasising racial differentiation in *Mukhtar's* army, which contained two races of Arabs and Persians, and by promoting the idea of racial superiority of Arabs among *Mukhtar's* army caused a split in the army and consequently its defeat. The interesting point here is that the *Aal-e Zubayr* army killed all of *Mukhtar's* companions that wishfully accepted the promises of *Aal-e Zubayr*.

Therefore I can say that the other preferred meaning of this series has been articulated regarding the signifier of "insight". The preferred meaning that this series is trying to articulate according to this signifier seems to be a privative meaning—you define what insight is by identifying those who lack insight. It means that anyone who doesn't have

insight when confronting the enemy: firstly, has helped the enemy to reach its interests and secondly has destroyed itself. Now it seems crucial to look at what could be the preferred meaning of insight.

In the aftermath of the 2009 presidential election in Iran, the term “insight” (*basirat*) entered into the political literature of the IRdisc. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, was labelling some people as “blinkered elites” (*khavas-e bi-basirat*). By this he meant the elites who before this election were acting in the interest of the Islamic Republic’s aims and goals, but after the election they lost their insight and in his opinion, were serving the enemy who wants the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The simplest meaning of the signifier of insight could be grasped as not serving the enemy. Ayatollah Khamenei believed that blinkered elites, consciously or unconsciously are acting in the interests of the enemy and not only are they making trouble for the Islamic Republic, but also through so acting are destroying themselves. The official voices of IRdisc, by referring to the signifier of insight and by considering the privative meaning of this signifier have tried to represent some elites, which previously were active subjects in advancing previous articulations of this discourse, as “others”. Three elites should be identified here, namely *Mir-Hussein Mousavi*, *Seyed Mohammad Khatami* and *Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani*. They were very high-level officials of the Islamic Republic for three eight-year periods.

As argued in the theoretical chapter, mentioned figures in the history of the Islamic Republic, have been representative of different articulations of the IRdisc under different circumstances. These articulations mentioned as “Islamic Leftist”, “Economic Development” or “Reconstructionist” and “Reformist” in the theoretical chapter. Nonetheless in social conditions during and after the presidential campaigns of 2009, all these figures may be considered as supporters of the Reformist articulation, headed by *Mousavi*, since they were emphasising the republicanism face of the IRdisc against the Principlist articulation, which highlights the Islamism face of this discourse by the centrality of the Ayatollah Khamenei as the determinant of principles.

Thus, the authority of Islamic Republic and especially the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, with labelling them as blinkered elites, makes them as “others” for the IRdisc. This is when former active forces within the IRdisc, have become antagonistic forces since the principlist articulation was recognised as the privileged articulation,

and reformist articulation eliminated as the articulation of “others”. Therefore it seems that those lacking insight and in the “blinkered” position are acting in the interests of the enemy who is aiming for the collapse of Islamic Republic. Nonetheless what these elites were doing in the aftermath of the 2009 Iranian presidential election were efforts to present a new articulation of political, cultural and financial meanings, which could make the discourse of Islamic Republic more hegemonic. However, this articulation was challenging the position of the forces that were beneficiaries of maintaining the existing form of discursive articulation, namely the Principlist articulation that the supreme leader has supported.

Velayat Madari¹³

Nonetheless, grasping the preferred meaning of notion of insight in the discourse of the Islamic Republic leads us to the importance of another notion. This notion also can be considered as the other signifier that the *Mukhtar Nameh* TV series has tried to present a preferred meaning on. This signifier is “*velayat-madari*”. “*Velayat-madar*” persons are people who are believed to be defending the legitimacy of Shiite sovereignty in the era of occultation even if this defence causes their death. The subject position of *velayat-madar* could be grasped as the position of Principlists in the political realm of the Islamic Republic since the main principle in their articulation, as argued in the theoretical chapter, is maintaining the Islamic face of the IRdisc by emphasising the centrality of the position of the supreme leader as determinative of principles. This TV series has sought to articulate the preferred meaning of “*velayat-madari*” by representing the subject position of the Iranians in *Mukhtar*’s army, who stood by *Mukhtar* till *Aal-e Zubayr* killed them. The Iranians in *Mukhtar*’s army were standing behind *Mukhtar* from the beginning of his uprising till the collapse of *Mukhtar*’s authority. They were killed by *Aal-e-Zubayr* in an unequal battle, which was the result of highlighting racial differences among Persians and Arabs of *Mukhtar*’s army. After the death of some Iranians of *Mukhtar*’s army by *Aal-e Zubayr*, an Iranian

¹³ *Velayat* literally means governance and it refers to the supreme leadership and protectorship of the Islamic jurists (*velayat-e faghih*), which is the Islamic governance of jurists. *Velayat-madari* is a term used by followers of the supreme leader in Iran, which can be described as making *Velayat* or supreme leadership the focus of one’s mind and actions. This term literally means adherence of *Velayat* and *Velayat-madar* persons are *Velayat* adherents. Since I couldn’t find a proper English equivalent for this concept, I will use its transliterated form in my thesis.

soldier raised a three-coloured (red, green and white) flag on their grave. This flag currently is the official flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this section of the series we can hear the voice of this Iranian soldier during a narration that claims this flag is the symbol of “*velayat-madari*” and affection for Shiite Imams till the end of the world and the Day of Judgment. Here it is evident that taking a contrary position with the position of *Velayat-madar* has been recognised as if that is only done by “others” in the IRdisc. Thus if we consider the position of *velayat-madar* as position of the Principlists in the realm of politics, then consequently, the Reformists, who highlight the face of republicanism in articulation of the IRdisc, are recognised as “others” in the Principlist articulation of this discourse. As argued in the theoretical chapter, I acknowledge the Principlist articulation as the IRdisc in the current circumstances.

In fact, it can be said that notions of “insight” and “*velayat-madari*” are strangely meaningful in association with *Mukhtar*. It means that *Mukhtar* is the symbol of insight and “*velayat-madari*” as the relation of others to these notions is meaningful through their relation to *Mukhtar* himself. In *Mukhtar Nameh*, salvation of people depends on their connection to *Mukhtar*. People who reach salvation are those who lose their life for *Mukhtar*. In contrast, those who confront him or betray him are far from such salvation. Thus, salvation is nothing but martyrdom and martyrdom is to die for *velayat* (Islamic governance).

Purpose of Addressing the “Others”

The *Mukhtar* position as the head of the state, which is assumed to have a metaphysical source of legitimacy or in other words, the head of an ideological state, determines the position of insiders and the “others”. That is, the positions of people who have insight versus those who are misguided. In fact his position is strangely similar to Ayatollah Khamenei’s in the Islamic Republic state, while people’s position is defined respecting their position to the supreme leader.

Understanding the Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis seems impossible without grasping the function of two concepts in this theory: “antagonism” and “otherness”. In the point of view of Laclau and Mouffe, principally discourses are formed in antagonism and difference with each other. The identification of a discourse merely becomes possible in conflict with other kinds of identification by other discourses. This

kind of identity and identification is conditional on the presence of others. It means that discourses are defining themselves mostly according to other discourses and identities.

Torring (1999) believes that what helps a discourse to be hegemonic is negating and eradicating the circumstances in which possibly subjects could gain other identities rather than what the hegemonic discourse intends. This negating is done by hegemonic discourse in two realms with use of force and suppression elements. The first step is negating meanings, which are not the preferred meanings of hegemonic discourse for specific signifiers. The second step is negating individuals and groups which identify themselves according to those alternative meanings that are not the preferred meanings by the hegemonic discourse. Torring (1999) believes that this negating and eradicating of alternative meanings and subjects of other discourses will cause the emergence of "social antagonism" (p120). Discourses that remain hegemonic or become hegemonic always make and hold others against themselves. This otherness helps discourses in various situations in order to fix and reinforce subjectivities according to their desired articulation. Thus the hegemonic discourse uses others in order to identify its subjects. Therefore the existence of others for a discourse on the one hand causes the coordination of the identity of that discourse and on the other hand causes distinction between that discourse and its rivals (Laclau, 1990, p17).

Since, as we discussed, the closure of a discourse is impossible, the hegemonic discourse could not completely eliminate the others and the marginalised voices. Therefore, the possibility of their return in the realm of challenge and competition regarding their preferred meanings is considerable. Laclau and Mouffe know this possibility for return and reconstruction of marginalised voices as the possibility of "the return of the repressed". Whenever the hegemonic discourse attempts more to prefer its own meaning regarding the floating signifiers and does this by repression and marginalisation of other voices, it is more at risk for losing its hegemony. The combination of satisfaction and repression elements causes hegemony for a discourse. Whatever the repression part becomes greater and the satisfaction part become less in this combination. At this point, the loss of the hegemony become more likely. Therefore, whatever the hegemonic discourse makes the others according to

alternative meanings, which are threatening the meaning of its nodal point, this would be helpful regarding identifying subjects of the hegemonic discourse. Nonetheless, whenever this making the others and marginalising of voices is done regarding the signifiers (whose alternative meanings do not threaten the meaning of the nodal point), the hegemonic discourse may be closer to losing its potential subjects. This will increase the possibility of dislocation for moments in the hegemonic articulation and consequently will expose the hegemonic discourse to collapse and at the same time increase the need for suppression forces. In other words, indulgence in discursive conflicts, either in rough suppression of other discourses or in excessive making of others, will cause the radicalisation of the discourses of the “others”. As Laclau argues:

We must assert that a discourse, or a discursive formation, established its limits by means of excluding a radical otherness that has no common measure with the differential system from which it is excluded, and that therefore poses a constant threat to that very system” (Laclau, 1995, p151, cited in Torfing 1999, p124).

As Laclau (1990) argues, the banished “others” in a hegemonic articulation, always remain threats for the hegemonic discourse. The elimination of the others is beneficial for a hegemonic discourse when the articulations of the discourses of others are considered as radical articulation by the hegemonic discourse. This means that they do not have any distribution within the differential system, which is tolerable in the field of discursivity of the hegemonic discourse. In this case we can call the others as a “constitutive outside” for the hegemonic discourse. Since the hegemonic discourse firstly emphasises on its ideal subject position which have been formed in contradiction with others and secondly convinces its subjects that they also will be eliminated as others if they accept preferred meanings that have formed the subjectivity of others. This making of “others” leads to the cohesion of subjects against those “others” either in terms of denying their preferred meanings or rejecting them. By rejecting them, it causes them to be repressed and eliminated by the hegemonic discourse (Laclau, 1990, p17). The hegemonic discourse in order to remain hegemonic

has to make others against itself and also has to marginalise voices, which don't accept preferred meanings of hegemonic discourse articulation.

Mukhtar Nameh was on air exactly 1 year and 3 months after the 2009 election, when opposition leaders, *Mir Hussein Mousavi* and *Mahdi Karoubi*, went under house arrest. At this point, the Green Movement had no objective stronghold and thus, in the view of the IRdisc, was exterminated. That is why the representation of ideal subject positions of the Islamic Republic regarding the mentioned signifiers and determining positions of others contrary to these subject positions, would help the Islamic Republic to be rescued from a crisis which made the preferred meanings of these signifiers get dislocated. In order to perform the rescue, the official media of this discourse claimed constantly that *Mukhtar's* story is the story of our time. After each episode, there was a program named "Time to Ponder" (*Hengam-e Derang*) which was designated for the analysis of that episode. In this program, a guest was attending as an analyst who was mostly trying to associate events of *Mukhtar Nameh*, which they claimed to be historically true, to the current situation of the Islamic Republic. In comparing these situations, they aimed to strengthen the legitimacy of the IRdisc under a crisis situation.

It is worth mentioning that representation of these subject positions helps the nodal signifier of the IRdisc, which is the reading of Ayatollah Khomeini from Shiite Islam, to become mythical since deconstructing this nodal point by subjects leads to their suppression by the repressive forces of the IRdisc. Altogether, what the Islamic Republic conducted in the time of crisis for its dislocated preferred meanings was not to redefine the nodal signifier and its preferred meanings, but to strengthen this signifier. Insight, *velayat-madari* and the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic's sovereignty in the era of occultation and the way these notions are represented are tightly dependant on the supreme leader, as there is an innate legitimacy that purportedly only can be found in him. As these notions and subject positions get used to making the nodal signifier of discourse more ideological and mythical, the problem is that there is no explanation for their legitimacy or an explanation of why they are legitimate. Instead, it is supposed to be only the connection to the supreme leader that stands as the single source of their legitimacy. To oppose these subject positions is to oppose the head of discourse and hence, question his legitimacy and then become

the “others”. On other hand, the acceptance of supreme leadership is accepting the legitimacy of these notions and placing in ideal subject positions the IRdisc. Actually, the IRdisc tries to represent its ideal subject positions and the position of “others” against these positions to make its nodal signifier more mythical and ideological by it being the subject of de-familiarisation or deconstruction.

Conclusion

Mukhtar Nameh attempts to represent three ideal subject positions for the subjects of the IRdisc in the form of a historical narration and defines the “others” as well as those who are placed in contrary subject positions in rival discourses. These three subject positions are:

- 1) To accept the legitimacy of Islamic “sovereignty” in the era of occultation.
- 2) To prefer the subject position of people with “insight”, showing that they resist the enemy and are not deceived by his tricks.
- 3) The subject position of “*velayat-madari*” is to accept the dominant position of the Islamic governor as the ideological authority.

Considering the legitimacy crisis, the Islamic Republic faced after the presidential election of 2009, both accepting such subject positions as ideal positions by subjects and also not identifying with others who are questioning the legitimacy of these subject positions would save the IRdisc from being collapsed and would form subjectivities according to desires of this discourse in recognition of others and insiders. It is of vital importance to know that as these notions, insight, Islamic sovereignty and *velayat-madari* and their legitimacy are ideological notions related directly to the Islamic Republic’s politics, the identification of Iranian subjects within these positions on the one hand and on the other hand not identifying with positions of others could be very useful for the state to survive its legitimacy crisis. In other words, if subjects do not identify with opposed positions, the discourse has reached its aim to represent its ideal subject positions. In this situation, subjects who neither identify themselves with these positions, nor with the opposed positions, are less political and less ideological subjects and it would help the IRdisc to remain hegemonic and dominant. After the next chapter and in conclusion, I would return to this issue

and the reason why not being political and ideological for subjects of the IRdisc would help this discourse remain hegemonic.

In the next chapter, I am going to analyse perceptions of Tehranian middle class members in regard to obtaining preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the IRdisc through analysis of the three TV series. I will examine if the subjectivity of this class has been constructed in regard to desired characteristics of this discourse which have been represented in the analysed TV series.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BODY OF THE RESEARCH, FINDINGS 2: ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE CLASS ATTITUDES

The main aim of this research is to explore positions of the Tehranian middle class in relation to the represented preferred meanings of the IRIB by considering three popular TV series. In other words, the main concern of this research is to find out how dominant and hegemonic is the IRdisc for Tehranian middle class subjects, as the preferred meanings of this discourse have been represented in three TV series. Consequently, this analysis leads to exploring the characteristics of the subjectivities of middle class members and the hegemony of the IRdisc in constructing them.

In analysing the middle class perception of ideals of the IRdisc, it is significant to consider when a discourse tries to interpellate subjects by representing its ideal subject positions. This interpellation of course is done in the context of other interpellations by other discourses. It means that subjects, based on their social positions, age, sex, education, etc. are subjects of interpellation by various discourses. Accordingly, the subjectivity of each individual is a formation of different and sometimes antithetical elements and meanings. Additionally, discourses are also articulations of different meanings around a “nodal point”. Therefore, the encounter of discourses and individuals in the process of interpellation is the encounter between two kinds of formations. The subjectivities of individuals need not be coherent and homogenous. In the same way, discourses need not be coherent or inherent phenomena. Rather, discourses are formations and articulations of different features and meanings, but in the encountering of discourses, preferred meanings and individual identity formations in the process of interpellation it is necessary to understand at what level preferred meanings of particular discourses are forming the identity of individuals. The answer this question will lead us to a good understanding of the hegemonic level of discourses in making subjects. Attempts of discourses in the process of interpellations are to naturalise and normalise their forms of articulations regarding how to be hegemonic. It means that discourses are trying to hide the fact that their preferred meanings are constructed meanings and are not essential and eternal meanings. Therefore as I have argued in the theoretical part, a discourse can

be hegemonic when it can temporary fix its preferred meanings regarding the specific signifiers. The main attempt of this research is to find out if the discourse of the Islamic Republic can be considered hegemonic in constructing subjectivities of the Tehranian middle class. I do this using three signifiers: “woman”, “the 60s” and “sovereignty”. In order to grasp the relationship between preferred meanings of the IRdisc and the hegemonic level of these preferred meanings among the Tehranian middle class, I have analysed three popular TV series in order to grasp what are the preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding the mentioned signifiers and consequently I have conducted interviews from the Tehranian middle class to examine the hegemonic level of the IRdisc among the Tehranian middle class.

In order to analyse the data from the interviews, this data has been transformed to some categories. These categories demonstrate how Tehranian middle class members are identifying themselves regarding signifiers such as “woman”, “the 60s” and “sovereignty”. Consequently in each part related to the specific signifier, I will examine if the preferred meanings of the IRdisc that has been articulated in the TV series and can be considered as the hegemonic meaning of that signifier among interviewees from the Tehranian middle class or otherwise.

DATA ANALYSING IN REGARD TO SIGNIFIER OF “WOMAN”

In analysing the “*Shams-ol Emareh*” TV series I have argued that the IRdisc was trying to establish its preferred meaning regarding the signifier of “woman”. This discourse was using its most powerful and most important “ideological state apparatus” (namely Iranian state television) and represented its ideal subject position. The state apparatus has tried to articulate the preferred meaning of “wife-mother” for the signifier of woman. Considering this preferred meaning and the ideal subject position of the IRdisc which has been represented in the “*Shams-ol Emareh*” TV series, I went to the Tehranian middle class to examine if this represented subject position is the actual preferred meaning of “woman” or not. The responses to questions about the signifier of “woman”, have formed four categories.

First Category: Moments/Fixed Meanings

This category represents the consistency of interviewee’s subjectivities regarding the signifier of “woman” with the preferred mother-wife meaning of the IRdisc. Other

potential meanings of this signifier have been marginalised and the preferred meaning of mother-wife has become hegemonic among subjects that made these statements. The A-1 table in the appendices shows statements by the 52.22% of interviewees that have been categorised under this category.

Although it is possible that a number of interviewees and in general the Tehranian middle class subjects could be opposed to the obvious ideological or political ideas of the IRdisc, the fact is the identification processes are often subconscious. Thus, the middle class's politics here is not as important as it may seem at first. It means that sometimes it is possible for subjects to disagree with some ideas of a discourse, but meanwhile the major parts of his/her subjectivity have been formed by that discourse within the subjectification processes. For instance Interviewee 16, at the beginning of the interview thought that I am coming from the Iranian authority and this interview is for one of the state's institutions. At first she avoided answering my questions, but after I explained to her that this interview is for academic uses, she accepted to be interviewed. She started to complain about the political and cultural situation in Iran and she wished for the collapse of the Islamic Republic state. After I made a question about her ideal type of division between house chores and earning money, she stated: "it is the duty of woman to be at the house and be the ideal mother for her children, and provide a warm atmosphere at home for her husband". Also Interviewee 19 at the beginning of the interview started to complain about the situation of women in Iran-- including about compulsory headscarves. Shortly after, I asked her opinion about women who work. She claimed: "a woman should be provided for in all aspects to be able to handle house chores." Also she claimed, "women have some needs, financially and emotionally, and men must answer the needs of women". Interviewee 15 stated that she is not a religious person at all and she believed that religion is the major problem of Iran's current situation. I asked her about her opinion about earning money by women in a household and she stated: "I totally disagree with women earning money; it is the duty of men to earn money and be the provider for the household. The duty of women is spending this money properly". Also, Interviewee 40 who was criticising the compulsory *hijab* law in Iran, believed: "it is the duty of men to earn money for households, because men are stronger than women, both biologically and

mentally”, and during the conversation she stated: “everything is better in its traditional form, women working outside home is against our traditions”.

Interviewee 45 who disagreed with the political ideas of the Islamic Republic state and believed that we in Iran have major cultural problems, stated: “since women are less logical than men and their actions are more based on emotional feelings, it is the duty of men to guide the household, both in making major decisions and also I think earning money is the duty of men and women mustn’t work outside the home”. She believed: “the ideal duty division between women and men is the traditional form, namely women in home and men outside home”. Interviewee 62 presented some statements about the importance of femininity and she knew herself as a woman who tries to reach the height of femininity, she believed: “being a woman is joyful, someone who grasps the pleasure of being a woman, can be both a good mother and a good wife. If we say that women should work, it is against the femininity of a woman”. She continued: “women are inherently dependent lovers, and this is because of the affection that God has created women with. Women should be lovers and their beloved should be their husband and children”.

Interviewee 70 who identified himself as a religious person and believed that compulsory *hijab* is beneficial for society, stated: “I come from a religious family. In this type of family, earning money is the duty of men and women should do house chores. House chores are so varied and a woman should spend all of her time to be successful in these chores”. Interviewee 75 also identified himself as a moderately religious person and believed: “If a woman has a job outside the home, she spends her time in vain, because the major duty of a woman is being in love. A woman should love her life and her husband in order to be an ideal woman”.

In fact my aim by putting these kind of statements together is to elaborate this crucial point: although it is possible that, subjects of a discourse be different with each other in case of beliefs and lifestyle, but all of them with even consideration of these differences, could be known as subjects of a specific discourse. In fact this discourse, by consideration of logic of difference, could make its preferred meanings with regards to the signifiers which are more close to the nodal point of the discourse. As we see, interviewees with different and sometimes contradictory beliefs, are similar in their preferred meaning regarding the signifier of “woman”, namely they identify

themselves with the meaning of mother-wife, which is the preferred meaning of the IRdisc.

Therefore making subjects by discourses does not mean the creation of a homogenous form. Rather, it means discourses by recognition of the logic of difference could make their desired meanings, preferred regarding to specific signifiers. When a signifier is closer to the nodal point of a discourse in discursive articulation, that discourse is trying to make its preferred meaning also the preferred meaning of subjects.

In analysing this category, I am trying to explain that although it is possible subjects have identified themselves regarding the signifier of woman with other discourses rather than the IRdisc, I can claim that this is also the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Hence, the IRdisc can take benefits of this kind of identification in its articulation.

As I have elaborated in the theoretical part, each discourse is trying to represent its preferred meaning regarding the specific signifier as the true and inherent meaning of that signifier. Acceptance of preferred meanings of a discourse as inherent meanings of signs by subjects, could temporarily fix the meaning of a sign and can create satisfaction among subjects of their true identification against the false perception that belongs to “others”. In the end, this kind of satisfaction could lead to the approach of a discourse ready for temporary closure.

The noticeable point in analysing statements under this category is that 88% of all statements under this category see being a mother as the inherent duty of a woman. It means that they reduce the role of women to the duty of being a mother, because women are inherent mothers. Then they, with reference to this inherent duty, believed that a woman should take care of her child rather than go out of the home to earn money.

Interviewee 73 believed that: “women are inherent mothers and basically, women have been created to be mothers, so a woman must accept duties related to this inherent role, working outside the home and earning money, is incompatible with their inherent role as mothers”. Interviewee 72 believed that: “the perfection of a woman is accepting roles that nature has brought for her, and these roles are being a good mother for her children and being a good wife for her husband”. He also believed: “bringing up children in the safe and warm atmosphere of a household, is the duty that women have naturally”. Interviewee 68 stated: “always and in all societies throughout

history, women and men have had separate roles and duties according to their nature. The duty of men is providing money and safety for families and the duty of women is doing house chores and bringing up children”.

Lots of interviewees believed that a man could never do what a woman could do for children in their upbringing. This is believed to be innate and thus part of what nature has given women. That is, they felt that the main duty for women is being mothers. Interviewee 54 stated: “Fathers are not mothers, so they never can do what mothers can do for children. According to the law of nature, women are inherent mothers and they have to act according to their inherent nature”. Interviewee 65 believed: “when a woman follows her interests and works outside the home, then it causes the incorrect upbringing of children, when a woman became a mother, if she works, she has betrayed her children and even herself”.

Lots of statements by interviewees, which have been mentioned in the statements table, show the acceptance of the preferred meaning of mother-wife by interviewees. Some interviewees, when explaining their position regarding the signifier of woman, have negated meanings that may have been articulated in other discourses and presenting the alternative preferred meaning regarding the signifier of woman rather than the mother-wife meaning. Negating other possible meanings of a signifier, which has been articulated in other discourses, by subjects, will automatically lead to the acceptance of the preferred meaning of the hegemonic discourse. It means the negation of “other” as an undesirable kind of identification who has identified her/himself with the false meaning of a signifier. For instance Interviewee 46 has stated: “If a woman works outside the home, children become delinquent and even criminal. It is not good for children to even go to kindergarten, because it is the duty of mothers to train her children, not kindergarten teachers or mentors”. Interviewee 63 believed that “Nowadays, our society does not deal properly with women and women have no security to work outside homes. Each woman who works outside the home, loses her knack for dealing with children. Since society is impatient in dealing with women and consequently women become impatient in dealing with children”. He continued: “These days in the West, people don’t believe that woman must be with her children and bring them up and this has led to deconstruction of family and household in the west”. Interviewee 67 believed: “people that believe women should

work outside the home, are under the influence of foreigner's propaganda, the West wants to make us like itself, but you see the situation of women and family in the West, it is pathetic".

In general and among statements that have been categorised under this category, three major positions can be recognised. All these three kinds are in line with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. The first kind considers the preferred meaning of mother-wife as the inherent meaning of the woman signifier. This kind of identification with a signifier is the most powerful form of relation between the subject's identity formations and the preferred meaning of a discourse.

In the second kind, subjects are identifying themselves with regards to a sign, by negation of other possible meanings that a sign could have. This kind of identification is the reason of making otherness by a discourse in order to be hegemonic. In this kind of identity formations, subjects have been convinced that accepting the other possible meaning of a sign in other discourses, could lead to their rejection from the society.

The third kind is the functional form of identification with the preferred meaning of hegemonic discourse. It means that subjects are identifying themselves with the preferred meaning of the hegemonic discourse because this preferred meaning can bring them a better objective quality of life. For instance in this category, subjects have been convinced that the meaning of mother-wife regarding the signifier of woman, leads to the better function of society both in the upbringing of children and providing a better situation for men in order to earn money for the household.

Second Category: Moments with Accepting the Logic of Difference

Statements that have been categorised under this category are presenting subjectivities that are close to the preferred meaning of the IRdisc, but have some small deviation. In other words, interviewees believed that although the main role of a woman is the mother-wife role, however, women should have some other activities for themselves in order to be happy in doing their mother-wife roles. This kind of positioning by interviewees mostly has been formed in responding to this question: Do you believe that women should have activities outside the home, which could be unrelated to their role as mother-wife?

Although statements under this category are not presenting meanings against the preferred meaning of the IRdisc, but they are presenting some sort of identity formations that have accepted this preferred meaning as the best functional meaning rather than the inherent meaning. Therefore the idea here is that they are seeking to bring objective situations for women to be happy with accepting the role of mother-wife and consequently this satisfaction brings a better function in social orders.

Twenty-eight out of 180 statements by 14 persons, equalling 15.55%, have been categorised here. The A-2 table in the appendices is presenting statements by interviewees that have been categorised under this category.

For instance interviewee 08 stated: “a woman mustn’t work outside the home and should deal with house chores efficiently, but women should have some activities like painting courses or etc. to be happy and joyful at home”. Interviewee 43 believed: “I think a woman should be active outside the home but these activities like artistic and exercise classes should never influence the main duty of a woman which is maintaining the home and children”. Interviewee 11 stated: “nowadays with existence of satellite TV and technological equipment, women never get bored at home, if they were bored they can go to swimming pools or shopping centres and etc. with their friends but these mustn’t cause failure in their duties in doing house chores”. She, who was an MA student, went on to say: “some women like me don’t like to have a job outside the home, but having outside activities is so important, for instance women should go shopping and have some fun with their friends”. Interviewee 84, who was also a female MA student, believed: “Today’s women don’t stay at home, these shopping centres and training classes have helped women to be more active in society and I think women should spend time on these activities as much as they can do on household chores that are their main duty”. Interviewee 25 believed: “it is true that women are inherent mothers but this doesn’t mean that women stay at home forever, women should go to exercise and computer classes, but they mustn’t forget their children and husbands when they are gathered with friends”.

Meaningful positioning under this category is showing that subjects by accepting the preferred meaning of mother-wife regarding the signifier of woman, are seeking to avoid any dislocation in this preferred meaning. It means that all subjects under this category are subjects of interpellation of other discourses, but they accept a situation

where subjects can act more freely in order to advance the mother-wife preferred meaning. It is necessary to note that in fact statements under this category have been presented in line with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. However, the satisfaction of subjects was the consideration of this kind of statements apart from the inherent meaning of the signifier of “woman”, which has been represented by the IRdisc.

The significant point in considering this category is the fact that interviewees, in considering activities that could make women more satisfied by their role of mother-wife, never mentioned any serious social activity that could be effective. Most of the interviewees considered shopping, going out with friends and activities compatible to the nature of women like artistic classes, exercise programs and language classes, as activities that could make women more efficient in doing their main role. For instance Interviewee 76 believed: “I think there is no need for women to work outside the home but they need to go to shopping centres and training classes like painting or music to be happy with maintaining the household.” Or Interviewee 36 stated: “Women should be active outside the home, women should go to classes, restaurants and gather with their friends in order to be content at home.” In this line also Interviewee 33 stated: “Being a mother, I mean good mother is more important for women than anything else, but if a woman wants to be a good mother then she needs to have fun for herself like shopping and going to restaurants.” Or interviewee 28 believed: “Women should be active in the society in order to avoid any depression; they should be entertained especially after children grew up. For instance they should go to shopping and gather with their friends.” These statements are demonstrating a kind of subjectivity that considers no effective role for women in the society, rather this subjectivity emphasises a need of women for society, rather than the need of society for women. Furthermore, the need for society in this sense is reduced to doing social activities like shopping. Therefore in the same line with the former category, the roles of women are reduced to the role of mother-wife, but also considers some privileges for women to take some advantages of social activities and then go back to their homes for doing their main roles. Women in this kind of subjectivity are just consumers of the society in doing social activities. The rapid increase of the number of shopping centres in Tehran and the increase of importing commodities are signs for reliance of the IRdisc on this kind of subjectivity for advancing its political economy.

This subjectivity not only is not questioning political meanings of the state but also advances its desire in being a consumer of its economic policies. Therefore this kind of subjectivity has been constructed in the same direction with the ideals of the IRdisc with regard to women, and acknowledging the logic of difference here means considering various possibilities for women to be active in society, but according to their nature, which means it reduces social activities to just being consumers.

Third Category: Floating Signifiers

Statements that have been categorised under this category are presenting a kind of subjectivity that although assumes other preferred meanings rather than wife-mother regarding the signifier of woman, but these meanings have not been rejected by the IRdisc. This means that although the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman is the mother-wife meaning, however, other possible meanings are existing within the system. In fact, statements that have been categorised under this category are presenting a kind of identification regarding the signifier of woman that are acceptable in the meaning system of the IRdisc, but are not the preferred meaning of this discourse. Forty-four out of 180 statements by 22 people have been categorised under this category, namely 24.44%. The A-3 table in appendices is presenting statements by interviewees that have been categorised under this category.

For example Interviewee 01 believed: “women could work outside the home if they want, but this is not their duty. They can work for themselves in order to not be bored but they also have to do house chores, for this reason it is better for them to do some normal works, which is not time-consuming”. Interviewee 07 stated: “it is good for both man and woman to work outside the home, but woman should work much less than man, for instance have a part-time job or just one or two days per week”. Most of interviewees under this category believe that the traditional division of labour between men and women works well. They felt that some labour is in women’s nature and they believed that it is better for women to do a job that is related to their nature. For instance Interviewee 14 was a female teacher and believed: “women should work both inside and outside the home, but outside the home women should do womanish works like soliciting sales in retail areas or as a secretary in offices”. Interviewee 21, a 61 year old female artist, stated: “a woman’s job should be compatible with her

maternal feelings. At the end of the day, women are more sensitive than men. If a woman wants to have a job outside the home, she needs to like that job a lot, for example working in kindergartens”.

In fact this kind of identification regarding the signifier of “woman” have neither been formed with regards to the preferred meanings of rival discourses nor are they present in the IRdisc. This kind of positioning is not presenting identification of subjects in regard to rejected meanings by the IRdisc. Therefore statements under this category are not presenting the preferred meaning of “others.” However, they are also not the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. It means that the preferred meanings of interviewees exist in the meaning system and field of discursivity of the IRdisc, as acceptable meanings but not rejected meanings that belong to others. As I have mentioned in the explanation of the previous category, it is possible that subjects have obtained these kinds of meanings from other discourses instead of the IRdisc, because individuals are subjects to the interpellation of various and different discourses. Also identities are formations that have been formed during interpellations of these discourses.

Nonetheless, apart from what discourses have formed this kind of positioning, it is important to know that these meanings are not inconsistent or in contrast with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Rather, the signifier of “woman” in this kind of positioning is a floating signifier that can get meanings other than just the wife-mother meaning. Meanwhile the wife-mother meaning is not altogether rejected either.

In fact the signifier of woman as a floating signifier in this kind of positioning on the one hand causes the impression of freedom of choice and satisfaction among subjects and on the other hand eliminates the possibility of identification with rival discourses. It is worth mentioning that among all statements under this category, a form of subjectivity could be found where there exists a belief that women’s working is good if they can earn money in order to support the financial needs of households. However the idea still seems to exist that the women should work some feminine jobs and also that they should do house chores as well. Interviewee 22 believes: “working for women is an option, but if the financial situation of the family is bad, so women should work to help men”. Interviewee 27 stated: “considering today’s financial situation, both men and women must work outside the home, but women should have part-time jobs to be able to handle house chores”. Interviewee 35 believes: “it is men’s duty to

earn money for the family and women's duty is the upbringing children and house chores, but women could help men if the financial situation is bad".

Some other interviewees believed that although it is good for women to work outside the home, the main duty of men is earning money for the family, so if women earn money, they should spend the money for themselves, not family. Interviewee 41, a female PhD student, stated: "men should not need women's money. But if a woman wants to work it is good to earn some money to spend on her interests". Interviewee 47 stated: "women could have womanish jobs outside the home if they want, but they have to spend the money that they earned for themselves, since financing the family is the man's duty".

As we can see this kind of positioning is presenting women's works as not necessary activities and hobbies for women. I also asked the interviewees who should do the house chores if a woman does work outside the home. When I asked this, most of them were emphasising that doing house chores is the duty of women and if a working woman could not do the house chores or bring up the children properly, then it is better to not work outside the home. Interviewee 56 believes: "One must understand what she wants. If she wants to work, that is very good for her, but she should never marry. But when she is married and has children, then she has duties to do in the home and no one can help her in doing these duties--like raising her children". Interviewee 17 stated: "a woman could have a job outside home just when she manages her time to do both, so I believe it is better for women to have part-time jobs if they want".

Some interviewees believed that if a woman wants to work, then house chores should be divided between wife and husband, but as women should work outside the home less than men, then men should work in the home less than women. Interviewee 07 stated: "95% of financial needs of a family must be earned by men and 5% by women if they insist on having a job. On the other hand, 95% of house chores are the duty of women and men should do only 5%". Interviewee 57 believed: "If even my spouse could finance the family properly, I would like to have a job. For instance, he is financing 80% of the family expenses and I am financing 20%, we should also divide the house chores by the same ratio but in reverse--80% me and 20% him".

Finally, I can say that although statements under this category are not representing the total acceptance of the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman by subjects, but they are also not representing the identification of subjects with rival discourses and counter-meanings of the IRdisc.

Fourth Category: Alternative Preferred Meanings

This category covers statements that present new kinds of identity formations regarding the signifier of woman that truly stand against the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. It means that interviewees that have stated these statements have identified themselves with “rival” discourses and “other” preferred meanings regarding the signifier of woman. The number of these statements was 14 by 7 persons among all 180, namely 7.77%. The A-4 table in appendices is presenting statements that have been categorised under this category.

For instance, Interviewee 18 believes: “Everything should be divided equally between men and women, house chores and earning money. Women have to work and be active outside home in society”. Interviewee 26 stated: “women must work, it is part of women's rights to be able to work outside the home like men and have financial independence in order to not be under men’s shadow”. Interviewee 48 believed: “It is totally nonsense if we believe that women should stay at home and be housekeepers, women need to be in society and the best form of being part of society is having a job”.

Clearly these kinds of statements that are presenting positioning of interviewees regarding the signifier of woman, not only are against the preferred meaning of the IRdisc but also they have been formed to reject meanings of the IRdisc. Not believing in the nature of women as mothers and not knowing an inherent meaning for the signifier of woman as mother-wife, believes in a kind of independency for women apart from being a mother or wife. It means preferred meanings of these kind of identity formations, not defining woman as a role in relation with other roles and positions. If we accept that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman is defining a woman in relation and dependent with other roles like children and husband and consequently family, these statements are presenting belief in the independency of women. Even in some statements, interviewees by emphasising the

independency of women have rejected the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. For example Interviewee 26 believed: “a couple should not have children at all, children cause women to be a housewife, a couple should agree on not having children”. Interviewee 31 stated: “women have to work in order to feel beneficial for society, unless they sacrifice themselves for their children and husband, and have nothing for themselves at the end of the day”. These statements contain rejection of the meaning of mother-wife and don’t reduce the role of women to just being mother and wife.

I asked about house chores from interviewees that have stated these kinds of statements, Interviewee 31 believed: “women must work outside the home and house chores must be divided equally between wife and husband. I think men and women are equal; and I see no reason that just women have to do house chores”. Interviewee 48 believed: “it is not fair that women stay at home and do just household chores, they should have a job outside home and household chores should be divided equally”. These statements are presenting the rejection of meaning of wife as a person who has to do household chores.

Therefore, statements that have been categorised under this category which are 8.71% of all statements, are presenting subject’s identification with marginalised and rejected meanings of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman. As a result, we can consider these meanings as the meanings of “others”, which have been formed in contradiction with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc.

Conclusion

The main concern of this part of my research was examining if the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman is the hegemonic meaning among the Tehranian middle class or not. Four categories have been obtained from interviews that are demonstrating different positions by this middle class regarding the signifier of woman. I have named these categories so that they also demonstrate the position of this middle class regarding the preferred meaning of the IRdisc which is the mother-wife meaning. The first category “Moments/Fixed meaning” demonstrates a total match between the interviewee’s positions and the meaning of mother-wife. The second category “Moments with accepting the logic of difference” also demonstrates the acceptance of meaning of mother-wife regarding the signifier of woman by

interviewees. Nonetheless this kind of position accepts the logic of difference and seeks for a way that makes subjects objectively satisfied by their identification with the meaning of mother-wife. Therefore, some social activities like training courses, artistic courses, shopping, etc. are considered as activities belonging to women in order to make them satisfied and not bored or exhausted in doing duties that belong to their main role as mothers and wives. The third category “Floating Signifier” demonstrates the subject’s identification with meanings rather than the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Nonetheless these meanings, although are not the preferred meanings of the IRdisc, but also have not been rejected or represented as the meanings of “others” by this discourse. It means that the meanings in this category exist in the meaning system of the IRdisc but are not the preferred meanings. Identification with these meanings doesn’t make subjects “others” or rivals in the IRdisc, but rather shows a kind of identification, which is acceptable in its meaning system. The fourth category “Alternative preferred meaning” demonstrates identification of interviewees with alternative meanings that are not acceptable in the meaning system of the IRdisc. It means that the IRdisc has tried to marginalise and reject these meanings that are not considering the inherent role for women as mothers or wives. The below table shows the numbers of interviewees and the percentage of statements in each category:

Category		Number of interviewees	Number of statements	Percentage
1	Moments/Fixed meaning	47	94	52.22%
2	Moments/Logic of difference	14	28	15.55%
3	Floating signifier	22	44	24.44%
4	Alternative preferred meaning	7	14	7.77%
Total		90	180	100%

The numbers and percentages in the above table demonstrate that the desired meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman is hegemonic among the

middle class. If we say that categories 1, 2 and 3 are not presenting any alternative meaning regarding the signifier of woman, then we can say that almost 92% of interviewees have not identified themselves regarding any alternative meaning of the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Meanwhile 52.22% of interviewees have identified themselves by the exact meaning that the IRdisc has desired. If we consider the second category also as the category that demonstrates the kind of identification that the IRdisc has preferred, we can say that the preferred meaning of mother-wife is hegemonic among almost 68% of interviewees.

Therefore, I wish to make the argument that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman is the hegemonic meaning among the Tehranian middle class. This signifier, as I have elaborated, is among the signifiers that the IRdisc has tried to prefer in its desired meaning after experiencing its main legitimacy crisis in 2009. When the meaning of mother-wife is hegemonic among Islamic Republic subjects, it means that this discourse can use this meaning in its ideal form of articulation. Namely if we say that discursive articulations are attempts to relate preferred meaning of a discourse in order to be hegemonic, the IRdisc can consider its preferred meaning regarding the signifier of woman as the hegemonic meaning and consequently can form other meanings in relation to this hegemonic meaning.

I should point out here that although it is possible to consider that this stereotype regarding signifier of woman, was expanded among the middle class before the existence of the dislocation, but the issue here is that the hegemonic discourse needs to reproduce stereotypes in different contextual circumstances. Stereotypes need to be reproduced in order to be expanded among subjects of a discourse and reproduction of stereotypes is related to the contextual circumstances that a discourse is experiencing. Therefore I can say that maybe the role of mother-wife regarding women was accepted by the middle class subjects before the emergence of dislocation, but this discourse after experiencing dislocation needed to reproduce its stereotype and again define its meaning system. Moreover, in a contextual reading of conditions that caused legitimacy crisis for the IRdisc, the role of women was not considered as the just mother-wife role. For instance, *Mousavi* himself always was attending in his campaign with his wife *Zahra Rahnavard*, who is an academic figure and is a woman figure, more than a wife or a mother. During the history of the Islamic

Republic state and during all electoral campaigns for the presidency, this was the first time that a candidate of Iranian presidency was showing up in public during his campaign alongside his wife as an independent figure. This can be understood as the rejection of the mother-wife role within the campaign that questioned the preferred meanings of the Principlist articulation of the IRdisc. Moreover, after emergence of the Reformist articulation of the IRdisc, the issue of women's rights was one the main concerns of this articulation. In contradiction, the Principlist articulation, has always emphasised the mother-wife role for women. Therefore this emphasis by the IRdisc on the mentioned stereotype and reproduction of this stereotype in the contextual circumstances after the emergence of the dislocation, could be interpreted as seeing gender equality and presence of women in public as active forces who are seeking to gain social influence, as a threat to the hegemony of the IRdisc. Therefore this discourse, after experiencing the dislocation, intended to reproduce its desired stereotype regarding women to form subjectivity that does not seek influence for women in society more than wives and mothers.

Therefor I can say that reproducing the mentioned stereotype by the IRdisc not only is contextually related to the conditions of the dislocation, but also is an act of repetition in order to flatten the hegemony of the IRdisc by eliminating the demand of gender equality which is definitely a political demand since it questions the preferred meanings of the IRdisc.

Therefore, considering reproduction of a stereotype, it can be said that the demand of gender equality has been suppressed in the subjectivities of the Tehranian middle class by accepting the role of mother-wife for women. Arguably this demand can be considered as the demand, which if becomes pervasive among the middle class, can cause deconstruction of articulation of the IRdisc and question the patriarchal nature of this discourse.

Gramsci argued that hegemony is a combination of both elements of "suppression" and "satisfaction". In regard to the signifier of woman, the IRdisc not only could gain people's satisfaction but also possibilities for demanding gender equality by this middle class has been eradicated. As I have described before these people can be against the propaganda of the IRdisc and can disagree with political or ideological ideas of this discourse. Nonetheless, within processes of subjectification the preferred

meaning of the IRdisc regarding one of its main signifiers, which is close to the nodal point since it negates the demand of gender equality, is hegemonic among these people. It means that these people are subjects of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of woman since they don't demand gender equality within their everyday life. Consequently, the IRdisc certainly is using this meaning in its articulation to relate its "other" desired meaning to this hegemonic meaning and make them hegemonic as well, in order to be the absolute hegemonic discourse.

DATA ANALYSIS IN REGARD TO THE SIGNIFIER OF "THE 60s"

In analysing the "Condition White" TV series in the previous part, I have argued that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding "the 60s", is highlighting "social cohesion" and "richness of meaning" during the 60s decade. The attempt of the IRIB in "Condition White" TV series was to prefer these meaning by romanticising the lifestyle of the 60s in order to reconstruct the link between the audience and this decade in an aesthetic way. The preferred meanings the series is trying to articulate are formed in relation to a signifier of the 60s and its lifestyle. Undoubtedly, what the IRdisc prefers is a nostalgic look to these meanings.

In order to examine if these preferred meanings could be considered as hegemonic among the Tehranian middle class, during 90 interviews, I have highlighted 180 statements by interviewees that make clear their position regarding the signifier of the 60s. This meant gathering two basic statements from each interviewee.

Responses to the interview questions about the 60s clarified the position of the interviewees regarding the 60s to see if they have nostalgia for the 60s or not. According to responses, two major categories have emerged. The first one demonstrates the existence of a kind of nostalgia among interviewees in remembering the 60s and the second category is about statements by interviewees that reject any kind of nostalgia in remembering that decade. After grasping if interviewees have nostalgia for the 60s or not, my questions were about clarifying why they have such a position. Actually my aim was to clarify the most significant features that interviewees think belong to that decade. During interviews, if I realised that interviewees have that kind of nostalgia for the 60s, I was trying to find out why they have this nostalgia and according to what features of the 60s they think living in that era was better. It is

worth mentioning that many of the interviewees, namely 51 persons, have been born during or after the 60s, therefore they do not have clear memories of that time. However, during the interviews I found no one who had no comment on the 60s because he or she did not live in that decade. It means that the IRdisc or even rival discourses, could form a kind of perception regarding the 60s so that people are not remembering living in that era, but can still have clear positions about that era.

Next, I am going to analyse this issue using the theoretical framework of the Laclau and Mouffe discourse analysis.

First Category: Moments/Fixed Meaning

The first category is named “Moment/fixed meaning” according to the Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory. Here statements demonstrate a kind of nostalgia and a total match between the preferred meaning of the interviewees and the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s. The signifier of 60s has become a moment in their identity formations according to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc that have been represented in the IRIB. It is worth mentioning that the objective living situation during the 60s is not the subject of study here. Instead, the main issue is how the Tehranian middle class are remembering it. Or, if they have no memories of the 60s, then what types of positions regarding the lifestyle during the 60s do they take? Therefore, my consideration is not examining if these kinds of memories are objectively true or false, but my consideration is examining the coordination of these kinds of taking position regarding the 60s with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. This category demonstrates that the signifier of the 60s in the identification process of interviewees that stated these statements can be considered as “moments” in the IRdisc articulation. It means the total coordination between the interviewees’ identification and the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. As I have elaborated in the analysis of the “Condition White” TV series, “social cohesion” and “richness of meaning” during the 60s are the meanings that the IRdisc has desired its subjects to prefer regarding the 60s.

Therefore I have divided this category into two sub-categories. These two sub-categories make clear the position of interviewees according to significant features of the 60s in their opinions. In the first sub-category statements are demonstrating the

reason for having nostalgia as the existence of “richness of meaning” during the 60s and statements under the second sub-category are indicating the reason for nostalgia as the “social cohesion” of the 60s.

Consequently two other sub-categories have emerged in the interviewees’ statements that are demonstrating the causes that make the 60s decade significant and different in comparison with today. It means that interviewees were expressing why the current social conditions of living are not the same as during the 60s. In forming these two sub-categories I tried to understand who interviewees are blaming for the loss of the living conditions of the 60s which were so pleasant for them. Finding the answer to this question has helped me understand if subjects are blaming the state in losing those conditions or they see other causes. If interviewees who have nostalgia for the 60s blame the state for the loss of the pleasant living conditions of 60s, then preferring the meanings of “social cohesion” and “richness of meaning” during the 60s by the IRdisc would be against its interests. Nonetheless if subjects blame something else in losing that “richness of meaning” and “social cohesion”, then the IRdisc can claim that those meanings are its ideal and agree with subjects in blaming other conditions for the loss of the pleasant conditions of the 60s.

It is worth mentioning that surprisingly, all statements by interviewees under this category which are making clear the position of interviewees in relation to the signifier of the 60s, could be categorised under one of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding the 60s, namely, “social cohesion” or “richness of meaning”.

Among all 90 interviewees, 77 persons, namely 85.55%, have admitted to having nostalgia for the 60s decade. Among these 77 interviewees, statements by 39 persons could be categorised under the preferred meaning of “richness of meanings” during the 60s decade and statements by 38 interviewees could be categorised under the preferred meaning of “social cohesion” during the 60s. I am going to analyse the first two sub-categories that make clear the reason of having nostalgia and afterward I will address the causes of having nostalgia for the 60s in analysing next two sub-categories.

First Sub-Category: “Richness of Meaning” during the 60s

Statements under the first sub-category are demonstrating the interviewee’s nostalgia for the 60s because of “richness of meanings” during the 60s decade. Statements by 39

interviewees among all 77 interviewees who admitted to having nostalgia for the 60s. This comes out to 50.64%. These statements are available in table B-1-1 of the appendices.

Interviewees that have stated the statements under this category believed that the kind of morality that belonged to the 60s is one that these days we cannot recognise in society. For instance, Interviewee 07 stated: "Humanity and spirituality were much higher among people back then so I have nostalgia for that time." Or Interviewee 89 stated: "Love and friendships were more real in the 60s, people used to believe in morality. Jealousy did not exist, and people were all alike. These days they are all jealous of the lives of others." Or Interviewee 73 believed: "Immorality has increased in society, if we had morality the way we had in the 60s, the situation would be much better." The interesting point here is that interviewees that believed in the existence of morality during the 60s, have not related this morality to objective conditions of the 60s, such as war or the Islamic revolution, but they believed that in general, morality existed during the 60s. And they also felt that this was a type of morality that does not exist today. It means that these subjects were having the kind of satisfaction in remembering the 60s and were satisfied with the meanings that they related to the 60s in general. Not mentioning any objective situation that may cause the richness of meaning during the 60s, this meant that the subjects are not seeing that kind of morality related to the ideological propaganda of the IRdisc during wartime or shortly after the victory of the Islamic revolution. Nonetheless, they relate this morality to the way people were dealing with each other; not the conditions that made people deal with each other in moral ways. For instance, Interviewee 23 believed: "There is no mercy in people anymore. No one has mercy on others. The government and economy does not really matter, people have changed." Or Interviewee 31 stated: "The most important thing we had and lost is honesty; no one would lie to others. There were important matters, which are dead now, such as humanity and honesty." Or Interviewee 36 believed: "Personal advantages used to be of less importance, now brothers have no mercy on each other. The intimacy we had does not exist anymore." Or Interviewee 61 stated: "What we used to have is morality. Values of that time are lost and people made it so. Values of that time were beyond humans; we used to have an ideal and perfect society."

Consequently the war between Iran and Iraq as the most important feature of the 60s and also the condition of a country dealing with a war shortly after the victory of the revolution have been forgotten and some interviewees believed that the current situation of the society should be the same as 60s, neglecting wartime. For example Interviewee 02 stated: "The spiritual and cultural atmosphere of the society was better back then. The current demand of our society is to return to those circumstances of the 60s."

The war between Iran and Iraq in the meaning system of the IRdisc, worked as the constitutive outside that caused the emergence of a kind of morality during the 60s. Nonetheless, nowadays in the identification process of subjects of the IRdisc, that constitutive outside has been forgotten and the morality that was the result is remembered. For example, statements like: "People's relationships were not based on taking and giving back then, people used to care about others for the sake of God. Pain and suffering used to be less, as people would be at each other's sides." (Interviewee 77), or "People used to be at each other's side. Nowadays, if someone has a stroke in the street, no one would take him to the hospital. People had forgiveness back then" (Interviewee 75). These are statements that clearly remember the 60s under the influence of war but not mentioning the war. Nonetheless the war as the most important element that caused the emergence of these kinds of moral values was forgotten and the morality apart from war has highlighted. In the meaning system of the IRdisc this means that this discourse could prefer its desired meanings regarding the 60s apart from indicating or accepting that this morality was the logical consequence of war in the society. Therefore this discourse by neglecting the role of war can interpellate its subjects and ask them why you don't have such morality any more, and people in responding to this interpellation are blaming themselves (people) in losing that kind of morality. This causes the security of the IRdisc to be blamed as the factor of losing that morality and makes this discourse vulnerable to political criticisms. Obviously this demonstrates depoliticisation of subjects of the IRdisc, because they are not seeing political reasons for emergence and also for the losing of that kind of morality, but instead they think that people have morally changed. Namely they relate the richness of meaning during the 60s to what people understand about life, not to political matters, and also relate the losing of morality to people's

understanding of life, not the current political situation of the IRdisc.

In statements that have been categorised under this sub-category we can see satisfaction of subjects in identifying themselves with one of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s. All these statements are relating to the kind of morality of the 60s decade that nowadays has been forgotten. Therefore we can say that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc is hegemonic among interviewees that have made these statements. In the coming section I will address the second preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s, which is “social cohesion”.

Second Sub-Category: “Social Cohesion” during the 60s

Interviewees, who have nostalgia for the 60s because of “social cohesion” during the 60s, have also made statements under this sub-category. Among all 77 interviewees their statements formed the category of “moment/fixed meaning”. Statements by 38 persons could be categorised under this sub-category, which comes out to 49.36%. These statements are available in table B-1-2 of the appendices.

Statements under this sub-category also present the acceptance of the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s. Nonetheless they see the most important feature of the 60s decade as the existence of social cohesion during the 60s. For instance Interviewee 28 stated: “The matters that have ruined our society now, they did not exist in the past. People were alike and homogenous”. Or Interviewee 68 stated: “People’s relationships used to be more beautiful; people had a better understanding of their situation. I have nostalgia, as people used to stick together. Now, they are torn apart.”

These statements are showing that interviewees believe that the kind of social cohesion existed during the 60s, does not exist anymore in the society. Therefore statements under this sub-category are all about society and concerns of people about losing social cohesion. Interviewees have mentioned different forms of social relations during the 60s that nowadays could not be found in the society. Some of them mentioned family relationships during the 60s and believed that families were closer together during the 60s. For example Interviewee 18 stated: “We used to gather with our family and friends a lot, now it is all gone”. Or Interviewee 30 believed: “Friends

and families used to spend more time together but today they neglect each other. Therefore I have nostalgia for the 60s, much better times indeed". Or Interviewee 80 stated: "Neighbours used to be like family back then; and now, family members are like strangers. Our society was consistent and homogenous. What about now?"

Also some interviewees believed that values during the 60s were different from today's values in society. They believe that today's culture of society is not the same as the 60s. They blame the culture as the matter that has changed and because of this change, the social cohesion has been lost. For instance Interviewee 43 stated: "Our people are so attracted to lowbrow culture that all they can think about is themselves. Despite the progress we had, no one cares about others, when they see them in trouble." Or Interviewee 24 believed: "Back then, people's culture was the same. It was easy to be prosperous. Everybody was like-minded back then, but now there is distance among people." The important thing in these kinds of statements is that interviewees are blaming the culture of the society and consequently they blame people for losing this culture. Also as I have mentioned in analysing the previous sub-category, these statements are so depoliticised. Namely what is important for interviewees is the culture of the society and they don't see this culture as the matter that is related to the contextual form of society. They also blame "people" for losing that culture and this is also securing the IRdisc as the matter of consideration. In all statements it seems that people are blaming themselves for losing that homogenous culture in the society. It is the exact form of identification that the IRdisc has desired in order to be hegemonic: the depoliticised vision by its subject in analysing the most politicised era after victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The important thing that interviewees have mentioned was the aim of society during the 60s. They believed that during the 60s, the Iranian society had a common aim and this aim made it an ideal society. "The 60s was the climax of our nation's idealism. Everyone had a common ideal. These days they all think of their own interests" (Interviewee 86). Or Interviewee 03 stated: "Those days, everyone was united and striving towards one aim. In the 60s, social solidarity was higher. I really miss those days." Although we can say that this aim that was mentioned by interviewees is victory in the war between Iran and Iraq as Interviewee 01 has mentioned: "I have nostalgia for the 60s, since back then, in the time of war, everyone was appealing for one thing

and that was victory in the war”, but the way that interviewees have mentioned that goal is in the most depoliticised way, because the victory in the war here is mentioned as the element that caused the solidarity of the society and social cohesion in the society. Although it is obvious that during wartime the range of social cohesion in any participant society in the war is increasing, but here the war stands against people. Because war is known as an element that caused solidarity and people are known as elements that caused the losing of that social cohesion. Here war belongs to the Islamic Republic state and culture belongs to people. When people mention victory in the war as the common goal of society, and also blame “people” for losing that social cohesion, we can conclude that the IRdisc by preferring its desired meaning could make a kind of satisfaction among its subjects when they remember the wartime during the 60s. Even this discourse could make this kind of satisfaction among subjects that have no clear memories of the 60s. For example Interviewee 83 stated: “I do not remember much about that time, but I know that there was a war and people were united and coherent. Communications were honest and intimate, not like today full of false flattery and hypocrisy.” Or Interviewee 70 stated: “I do not remember much about that time, but I believe the situation was better. At least people were kinder. People used to have common feelings, we have lost this unity.”

Interviewees under this sub-category have mentioned social cohesion as the one of the most important features of the 60s. As I have mentioned in analysing the previous sub-category, the concern of this research is not examining if the existence of social cohesion during 60s is true or false. Nonetheless the matter is that people are remembering the 60s as the era when the amount of social cohesion was higher than today and they blame people for losing this social cohesion. This means that not only the preferred meaning of the IRdisc is hegemonic among interviewees that stated these statements, but also the role of the Islamic Republic state has been neglected in seeing its responsibility for losing the social cohesion during the 60s.

In the next part I will analyse the next two sub-categories that are stated by interviewees who have nostalgia for the 60s because of the “richness of meaning” or “social cohesion”. Statements that have been categorised under the next two sub-categories are demonstrating the causes of losing that richness of meaning and social cohesion in the interviewees’ opinion. In the analysis of the next two sub-categories I

will elaborate more the depoliticised vision of interviewees in remembering the 60s and the causes of losing that pleasant living situation.

Third Sub-Category: Absence of Technology during the 60s

During interviews about the 60s, 77 interviewees among all 90 interviewees believed that because of the “richness of meaning” or “social cohesion” during the 60s decade, they have nostalgia for the 60s. After positions of interviewees became clear for me regarding the 60s, I tried to ask them why they think our society is not like the 60s and what has changed society? Interviewees’ responses to these questions could help me in order to understand if interviewees see a kind of defeat in Islamic Republic state ideals, or they see other causes for the loss of the richness of meaning and social cohesion of the 60s.

Interviewees’ responses to these questions led to the emergence of two sub-categories for the causes of the loss of the conditions of the 60s. The first sub-category, which surprisingly came out of the responses, is about the “absence of technology” during 60s. Namely interviewees that have made statements under this sub-category, believed that the emergence of technology has caused the Iranian society to move away from the conditions of the 60s.

27 interviewees out of 77 have mentioned technology as the cause of moving away from the ideal situation of the 60s, namely 35.6%. These statements are listed in the table B-1-3 of the appendices.

For instance Interviewee 09 stated: “We had social solidarity back then. Technology and the Internet have ruined everything.” Or Interviewee 65 stated: “The progress of technology has made people to tear apart and do not care about others. Back then, as much as you cared about yourself, at least half that amount you would care about others.”

Seeing technology as the cause of losing solidarity or intimacy of a society, looks like a projective point of view and this projective point of view has been desired by the IRdisc since it is extremely depoliticised. It means that interviewees by knowing technology as the matter that ruined the ideal society are not considering any possible political matter in this ruin. Therefore the Islamic Republic state in this point of view is acquitted from all possible action that could lead to the loss of the richness of meaning

or social cohesion.

Here, in the subjectification processes of the IRdisc, technology also can be known, as the constitutive outside factor that will cause the defeat in forming the ideal form of society. People, who blame technology for the loss in social cohesion are subjects of the IRdisc, because they see no defeat in the Islamic Republic's actions in losing the ideal form of society. What seems obvious here is the dissatisfaction of interviewees of their current living situation, nevertheless what has made them subjects of the IRdisc, is that they are not blaming the state or articulated meanings in the IRdisc for this dissatisfaction, but technology as the "other" is blamed. And in the more accurate look, we can see that people are blaming themselves in using technology. For instance Interviewee 90 stated: "These technologies like new cell-phones and tablets and especially internet, have caused the emergence of a new lifestyle. People spend no time together and even in family parties everyone just looks at their technological gadgets". Or Interviewee 77 believed: "All the ladies are watching satellite TV channels or using internet now, which is why they do not care about each other".

Here again "people" are the subject of blame, since they use this technology. It means that not only the preferred meanings of the IRdisc are preferred meanings of people and they are subjects of this discourse, but also these subjects blame "people" in moving away from the ideal situation during the 60s. The IRdisc in preferring its desired meanings regarding the signifier of the 60s, could exonerate itself from articulating meanings that could lead to the loss of richness of meaning and social cohesion. Therefore, people see technology as the matter that caused this loss and blame people for using this technology.

Fourth Sub-Category: Economic Welfare during the 60s

The next sub-category more clearly depoliticised the subjectivity of the interviewees. Statements under this category are available in table B-1-4 of the appendices. 50 interviewees among 77 (64.93%) believed that the current economic situation is the cause of moving away from the ideal form of society during the 60s, but only 7 interviewees (9.09%) believed that this economic situation is caused by mediation of political decisions (first seven statements in the table B-1-4 in appendices).

The important point is, even these 7 interviewees have not mentioned any political decision or action by the state that caused the emergence of a bad economic situation, but in general they have stated that the economic situation was better during the 60s. For instance Interviewee 29 stated: "Back then, you were sure about your financial situation, I mean, you knew that at least you would have something to eat with your family and you would not go hungry." Or Interviewee 52 believed: "Economic problems have reached a level that all principles and friendships have faded." It seems that in all statements about the 60s and the loss of the ideal living situation during that decade, the state plays no role. This also demonstrates the hegemony of the IRdisc in preferring its desired meanings regarding the signifier of the 60s.

Although the other 43 interviewees (90.91%), have economic concerns and believed that the economic situation during 60s was better, they also blame "people" for losing that welfare and lifestyle. Interviewees in expressing the causes of moving away from the conditions of the 60s have mentioned concepts like greed, luxury, money-based relationships, personal interests and selfishness. For example Interviewee 03 stated: "Everyone has turned into a wolf these days, they want to rob you and make money. Back then people cared about others." Or Interviewee 28 stated: "Our financial situation might have been worse, but no one was greedy. Now, everyone is greedy for more money." Or Interviewee 73 believed: "Humans when hungry, are worse than animals. I do not believe that our people are hungry, but greed has blinded them and made them obsessed with needs, which were not significant back then."

Again, here and among these statements people are subject to criticism. Interviewees believe that our society moved away from the 60s situation because of people and because they become more selfish and greedy for money. Again here the role of the Islamic Republic state in creating the current economic situation has been neglected. People are dissatisfied with the current economic situation and they blame the culture that "people" created for this dissatisfaction. For instance Interviewee 60 stated: "Money has become influential in a way that stealing is not immoral anymore. The one who steals more is wealthier and gets others to respect him, while it was humanity which used to command respect." Or Interviewee 80 believed: "People would give up their lives for the sake of others. These days, they do not even give up their money."

Therefore the IRdisc could make its desired subjects in a way that these subjects blame

themselves for not being the ideal subjects that they used to be. It means that in the identification process of these subjects, preferred meanings of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s, have been fixed in a way that if subjects objectively and based on their current situations move away from that preferred meanings, they blame themselves, because they know those meanings as the true meanings of life which brought for them a more pleasant living situation during the 60s. This is what I meant by a depoliticised point of view. The IRdisc could make that kind of subjectivity in regard to the 60s decade that acquits itself from being blamed for articulating meanings which leads to the current unpleasant living situation. Therefore, this discourse always stays in the minds of subjects as the saviour of values, which have emerged during the 60s and made the living situation better than what it is today. Also this kind of subjectivity does not recognise the IRdisc as the causes of failure, but blames “people” instead for the loss of the ideal social living situation during the 60s.

Second Category: Alternative Preferred Meanings

Statements that have formed this category are presenting different preferred meanings regarding the 60s from what the IRdisc has desired. Twenty-six statements by 13 interviewees have been categorised under this category which comes out to 14.44%. These statements are presenting the kinds of identifications which stand against the preferred meaning of the IRdisc that has been presented in the “Condition White” TV series. The B-2 table in the appendices is showing statements by interviewees that are not having nostalgia for the 60s and have preferred other meanings.

These alternative preferred meanings might be formed in regard to remembering the objective situation during the 60s. Some interviewees by referring to the living situation during the 60s believed that nothing beautiful existed then and everything was effected by war. For example, Interviewee 10 stated: “All I remember of the time is the hardship of war, the air raid sirens and fear. There was nothing beautiful.” Or Interviewee 76 believed: “What I know about 60s is war between Iran and Iraq, and I think having nostalgia about wartime is a kind of physiological illness.” In this kind of position, interviewees by referring to the actual living situation under effect of war during the 60s, see the war as an element that made the living situation difficult. It

means that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc has been deconstructed in this kind of position regarding the war. This deconstruction sees war as an element, which has caused nothing for the nation except fear and horror. Interviewee 64 believed that: “the 60s is the era of fear and horror, we experienced war at that era and the domestic policy was about eliminating political parties and social groups. Why should I have nostalgia about that dark decade?” This kind of remembering exactly stands against the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Again I reiterate that the concern of this research is not seeking for the true or false position regarding the objective living situation during the 60s, but all I desire is examining if the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding this signifier can be considered as the hegemonic meaning or not. Deconstruction of the meaning of war leads to preferring other meanings regarding the signifier of the 60s, rather than what the IRdisc has desired. After all, in the previous parts I have argued that the preferred meaning of interviewees regarding the signifier of the 60s is related to how they see war. If interviewees don’t relate the war to ideological and transcendental meanings, then the objective situation of living during the 60s under the effect of war becomes meaningless for them. For instance Interviewee 26 stated: “All I can remember is misery and misfortune. If you wanted to criticise, they would shut you up, because there was a war and revolutionary forces would make life hell for you.” Or Interviewee 50 believed: “People who have experience living in the 60s have forgotten the breath-taking circumstances in that decade, everything was about war and defeat.” These kinds of statements are presenting the kinds of identifications regarding the signifier of the 60s, which can be considered as rival meanings of the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. In this kind of identification, the meaning of war and the living situation that this war caused has been understood differently. As I have argued in analysing the previous category, in the meaning system of the IRdisc the 60s and the war caused social cohesion and richness of meaning. The IRdisc within forms of interpellations asks its subjects to remember the 60s as the beautiful era that the living situation was in its ideal form. If some people don’t accept this romanticising and glamorising and believe that it is propaganda of the IRdisc, then they have definitely identified themselves with other meanings rather than what the IRdisc preferred. For example Interviewee 26 believed: “If we say that people used to be better, we are affected by the state’s propaganda,

which wants to cover its problems.” Therefore here the “people” are not subjects of criticism as we saw in the previous category, but the forces that have caused the war and now are taking benefits from war are to be blamed. For instance Interviewee 57 stated: “60s is all about war and propaganda of the Islamic Republic about the war, which could have ended 4 years earlier. Wartime caused this Islamic Republic state to become more powerful by taking young lives.”

Therefore, statements that have been categorised under this sub-category are presenting alternative preferred meaning which are not acceptable in the meaning system of the IRdisc. Interviewees that have stated these statements see nothing beautiful or outstanding during the 60s that causes the emergence of nostalgia in their mind. This kind of identification doesn’t blame people for losing the ideal form of living situation during the 60s and instead highlights other possible meanings. It is worth mentioning that the IRdisc can articulate its preferred meaning in antagonism with this kind of identification, which is not considering the 60s as the ideal era. This is because the amount of this kind of identification regarding the signifier of the 60s is simply much less than the amount of the IRdisc ideal form of identification. Also the IRdisc can marginalise this form of identification, since it stands against “people” because it is not recognising the ideal form of society and people being during the 60s decade.

Conclusion

My concern in this part was examining if the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s which I obtained from the “Condition White” TV series can be considered as the hegemonic meaning among the Tehranian middle class or not. In analysing the data that I have obtained from 90 interviews, 2 major categories have been obtained. The first category is presenting the kind of identification that is consistent with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc. Namely interviewees that have made statements under this category, are having nostalgia for the 60s because they think the living conditions during this decade were in its ideal form. Statements under the second category are presenting alternative preferred meanings by interviewees in regards to the signifier of the 60s. It means that interviewees that have made these statements do not have nostalgia about the 60s decade since they don’t think living conditions during the 60s were better or outstanding. The table below shows the

numbers of interviewees and statements and also the percentages of the two major categories.

Category		Number of interviewees	Number of statements	Percentage
1	Moments/Fixed meaning	77	154	85.55%
2	Alternative preferred meaning	13	26	14.44%
Total		90	180	100%

In an overall view I can conclude that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the 60s is hegemonic among Tehranian middle class. The majority of interviewees, namely 85.55% are having nostalgia about the 60s because of their belief in the “richness of meaning” or “social cohesion” of that decade. As I have elaborated in the analysis of the “Condition White” TV series, the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s decade is nostalgia for this decade because of one or both of the mentioned reasons. Therefore these preferred meanings could be considered as the hegemonic meaning among the Tehranian middle class, since the majority of interviewees have admitted that they have nostalgia for the 60s decade and their statements demonstrated that the reason for this nostalgia is either the existence of “social cohesion” or the “richness of meaning” during the 60s.

Therefore the first category has been divided into two sub-categories, those having nostalgia for the 60s because of “richness of meaning” or “social cohesion” --both of which can be considered as preferred meanings of the IRdisc. The table below demonstrates the number and percentages of interviewees in each sub-category.

Sub-Category about reasons of having nostalgia about 60s		Number of interviewees	Number of statements	Percentage
1-1	Richness of meanings	39	39	50.64
1-2	Social cohesion	38	38	49.36
Total		77	77	100%

The approximate equality among statements about reasons for having nostalgia for

the 60s shows that the IRdisc has been successful in making its subjects prefer its desired meaning. In the process of making subjects prefer a specific meaning among all potential meanings, the IRdisc could gain the submission of the subjects in accepting the preferred meaning of social cohesion or richness of meaning during the 60s. It means that the interpellation of subjects by the ideological state apparatuses, and the state television is certainly among them, could successfully interpellate subjects regarding the signifier of the 60s and also could successfully make them prefer a specific meaning among all potential meanings. Therefore the meaning system of the IRdisc in facing the 60s signifier could make subjects satisfied in accepting its desired meaning and reach a temporary closure regarding the signifier of the 60s.

The main concern of the IRdisc, here could be that if people (subjects) have nostalgia for the 60s, this could lead to their dissatisfaction with their current living conditions. Therefore, it is very important to find out what the subjects consider to be the causes of losing those pleasant living conditions of the 60s. If subjects blame the state or government for losing that ideal social living condition, then the IRdisc damages its current hegemony by preferring these meanings regarding the 60s, but if people (subjects) blame other matters rather than the state and government, then the IRdisc has protected itself from being blamed by its subjects, and remains as a force that has a potential for returning back the current conditions to what existed during the 60s. Therefore it is important to understand the matters that subjects know as causes of losing the ideal living conditions during the 60s. The table below shows major causes of losing the ideal living conditions that have been obtained from interviews.

Sub-Categories about causes of losing ideal living conditions during the 60s		Number of interviewees	Number of statements	Percentage
1-3	Absence of technology during the 60s	27	27	35.67%
1-4	Economic welfare during the 60s	50	50	64.93%
Total		77	77	100%

During my analysis of the 1-3 sub-category, I have argued that none of the interviewees who made statements that have formed this sub-category, have blamed the state for losing the ideal living conditions of the 60s. They consider technology as a matter that works here as the constitutive outside force regardless of the IRdisc. Technology in this sub-category belongs to people, not the state, and people are eager to use technologies. Therefore, statements under this sub-category are blaming people for using technology and believe that the extreme use of technology is the cause of losing the ideal social living conditions of the 60s.

The 1-4 sub-category demonstrate that people believe the current bad economic situation has caused the loss of the ideal living conditions during the 60s decade. Nonetheless as we can see in the table below, only 9.09% of interviewees consider economic matters as the cause of the loss of living conditions of the 60s believe that the state has caused the emergence of this bad economic situation.

Point of view	Number of interviewees	Number of statements	Percentage
Political reasons	7	7	9.09%
Non-political reasons	43	43	90.91%
Total	50	50	100%

The majority, namely 90.91%, mention concepts like greed, luxury, money-based relationships, personal interests, selfishness, etc. have blamed people for losing the ideal social living conditions of the 60s.

Therefore I can conclude that not only the IRdisc could prefer its desired meaning regarding the signifier of the 60s among the Tehranian middle class, but also this discourse in the process of this preferring and articulating its preferred meaning has secured itself from being blamed in losing the ideal living conditions during the 60s and has made “people” to blame for this situation. Subjects are blaming people for losing the pleasant social living circumstances of the 60s. This blaming has two benefits for the IRdisc. Firstly people are not blaming the state and are blaming themselves for not remaining the ideal subjects that they used to be during the 60s for the IRdisc. Consequently this subjectivity that blames people, politically secures the IRdisc since it

contains depoliticised characteristic in facing current problems, which logically have accrued by the mediation of the IRdisc and government that supports this discourse. Secondly, by referring to the satisfying living conditions of the 60s, the IRdisc remains in the minds of the subjects as a potential that can return the conditions back to what existed during the 60s.

Therefore, the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of the 60s can be considered as the hegemonic meaning among the Tehranian middle class. The IRdisc by being successful in preferring its desired meaning regarding the 60s, which as I discussed, can be considered as the one of the important signifiers for this discourse, could secure itself from losing hegemony among its Tehranian middle class subjects. Representing a myth of social cohesion and richness of meaning during the 60s, could naturalise the current conditions of the IRdisc and this naturalisation logically leads to ignorance of social injustices that this discourse has caused.

Representing a myth of existence of social cohesion and richness of meaning during the 60s, leads to emergence of a social imagination, according to Laclau and Mouffe. If a discourse can relate this social imagination to a historical spot and highlight its desired element related to that spot, consequently having nostalgia to that historical spot is securing the discourse from being dislocated. Since this discourse by representing a myth and making a social imagination, introduces itself as a matter that objectively caused the emergence of that imagination. Nostalgia here means accepting this social imagination by the subjects and imagining that this myth objectively existed during a historical period. Here apart from what really was happening during the 60s, the 60s can be considered as a historical period that subjects of the IRdisc accepted as a period that their imagination of the richness of meaning and social cohesion objectively existed. Therefore having nostalgia for the 60s, not only means accepting the social imagination of the hegemonic discourse, but also means seeing that discourse (which represented the social imagination according to its desired elements apart from what actually was happening during that decade) as the most important factor that caused conditions of actualisation of their imagination, since in the middle class's subjectivity, this discourse has actualised richness of meaning and social cohesion once during the 60s. Therefor having nostalgia for the 60s is the demand of the IRdisc from its middle class subjects since it naturalises the current conditions of

this discourse. Arguably considering not seeing any political reason for losing the myth of social cohesion and richness of meaning by the subjects, making this nostalgia is an extremely political act by the IRdisc since it represses the demand of having social justice from the IRdisc since subjects see this discourse as the matter that caused social justice during the 60s, therefor they blame themselves for losing social cohesion and richness of meaning and this secures and naturalises the current conditions of the IRdisc.

Within this naturalisation, the demand of social justice has been suppressed in subjectivities of members of the middle class. Since this middle class by having an extremely depoliticised vision, firstly not recognizing any marginalised or suppressed social agencies, and secondly, not questioning or even mentioning preferred meanings of the IRdisc, which may cause the emergence of social injustice within the everyday life, in comparison with what they perceive to be the pleasant life of the 60s. In the subjectivity of interviewees, the poor, marginalized social groups and suppressed political activists are ignored and neglected, and this would naturalise the articulation of the hegemonic discourse and eradicates the demand of social justice.

Islamic Republic's subjects seem currently satisfied in accepting the myth of this discourse in their identity formations and don't feel forced in this acceptance.

DATA ANALYSIS FOR SIGNIFIERS OF “SOVEREIGNTY”, “INSIGHT” AND “VELAYAT-MADARI”

In the previous chapter, in the analysis of the *“Mukhtar Nameh”* TV series, I have argued that the IRdisc with the mediation of its main ideological state apparatus, namely the state television, has tried to represents its ideal subject positions and preferred meanings regarding to signifiers of “sovereignty”, “insight” and *“velayat-madari”*. As I have argued in the analysis part, these signifiers are closer to the nodal point of the IRdisc because they are making clear the ideological red-lines of the IRdisc. Therefore, the preferred meanings regarding these signifiers by the IRdisc has been done in a different way from the other two signifiers that I have discussed before.

The aim of the IRdisc and IRIB in articulating meanings regarding these signifiers was mostly in determining and clearing the ideal and the non-ideal subject positions, rather than preferring a specific meaning regarding these signifiers. Thus in analysing the

interview data, it is of vital importance to grasp that the notion of “others” is very important in taking positions regarding the signifiers of “sovereignty”, “insight” and “*velayat-madari*”. It means that the IRdisc by representing its ideal subject positions also has determined the position of “others” in dissident with the ideal subjects’ positions. Consequently, although the acceptance of the preferred meaning of the IRdisc by subjects is the ideal of this discourse in order to be the hegemonic discourse, but in analysing interviews’ data in this part we need to understand that the concept of “other” plays a critical and determining role. Since, as discussed, the concept of “other” and clarifying the subject position of others in opposition to the ideal subject position has two major benefits for each discourse. Firstly, the elimination of others as those who stand against and oppose the ideal subject position, and secondly this elimination causes other people (because of fear of being eliminated and punished by repressive state apparatuses) to opt out of the “others” subject positions. It is worth mentioning that in considering the second benefit for each discourse in identifying “others”, actions by repressive state apparatuses are determinant. Since if repressive state apparatuses deal with “others” in a way that creates fear among people from being punished by these apparatuses, the discourse has reached the ideal in representing its ideal subject position against the “others” position. Thus if people don’t accept the ideal subject positions that have been represented and also don’t identify themselves with “others” positions, because they don’t want to be punished by repressive state apparatuses, the discourse remains hegemonic. This is because people, on the one hand are not accepting the preferred subject positions of discourse, and on the other hand are not identifying themselves with opponent positions. Therefore in analysing interview data in this part, it is important to notice the position of interviewees not adopting the position of “others”.

In the aftermath of Iran’s 2009 presidential election, many were arrested and even killed during street protests. The “Revolutionary Court” gave prison sentences to many of the protesters that have been arrested. Those days a jail in southern Tehran named “*Kahrizak*” became notorious for its mistreatment of prisoners. A few protesters died in jail and whilst in detention. Some of them claimed that they were raped in “*Kahrizak*” prison. However, my concern here is not talking about what the Islamic Republic state has done in dealing with protesters. What I want to examine here is, if

the IRdisc by using its repressive state apparatuses, namely revolutionary court, anti-riot forces, police and prisons, could prevent people from accepting the position that this discourse considers as the “others” position or not.

As I have argued in the analysis of the “*Mukhtar Nameh*” TV series, the articulated meaning and represented subject positions in this series are related to the concept of “supreme leadership” in the IRdisc. All three signifiers that I mentioned above and the ideal subject positions in regard to them are defined by their closeness or distance with the position of the supreme leadership in the IRdisc. These subject positions have been defined in relation to the position of *Mukhtar*, which I have argued, is the same as the position of Ayatollah Khamenei in the IRdisc as the supreme leader. Hence in interviews, I have tried to grasp the position of interviewees regarding supreme leadership in the Islamic Republic state and the current supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

As I did when analysing the other two TV series, in each interview in this part I have highlighted two major statements by each interviewee. These statements are the exact words of the interviewees and are clarifying the interviewee’s position regarding “sovereignty”, “insight” and “*velayat-madari*” and their positions regarding the notion of supreme leadership and the current supreme leader. After elimination of non-related statements by interviewees, 4 major categories have been obtained from interviews. In the next part, I will name and analyse each category and will discuss if the IRdisc could reach hegemony by representing its ideal subject positions and defining positions of others in contradiction with these subject positions or not.

First Category: Ideal Subjects’ Positions

Statements that have been categorised under this category are demonstrating the acceptance of the concept of supreme leadership as the functional notion for ruling the country. Interviewees that made statements under this category believe that the current supreme leader has served the country properly. 36 statements by 18 interviewees have been categorised under this category. It means that the ideal subject position of the IRdisc regarding the concept of supreme leadership is hegemonic among 20% of interviewees. These interviewees, by mentioning different reasons, believe that having a supreme leader is beneficial for the country. The C-1

table in appendices is showing statements that have been categorised under this category.

Statements under this category are demonstrating reasons why interviewees are mentioning the supreme leader as beneficial for the country. These reasons could be grasped in relation to ideal subject positions that have been represented in the *"Mukhtar Nameh"* TV series. Some of these interviewees believe that the supreme leader is the person that can legitimise the sovereignty. For instance Interviewee 70 believed: "I support the supreme leader one hundred percent, since society needs a leader. Our society is Islamic, the leader must be Muslim." Or Interviewee 4 stated: "I believe in supreme leadership and I also believe the current supreme leader can prove that the Shia is right and fair". These kinds of statements are related to the notion of sovereignty. Namely interviewees that made these statements believe that the country needs a leader and without the supreme leader the country will fall into chaos. For instance Interviewee 45 stated: "The supreme leader as a superior person has saved the country many times. Everyone should trust the captain at the helm of the ship". Accepting the position of supreme leader by interviewees means that they are seeing the notion of sovereignty and supreme leadership related to each other and also they are considering the position of supreme leader as necessary for ruling the country. It means that the preferred meaning of the IRdisc is hegemonic among interviewees that made these statements. Indeed, I have argued in the part of the analysis of the *"Mukhtar Nameh"* TV series that the IRIB has tried to prefer this meaning: every Islamic state needs a supreme leader. Even some interviewees admitted that the current situation in the country is not in its ideal form, nonetheless they believed that it is not the fault of supreme leader. For example Interviewee 30 stated: "The supreme leader is good. His subordinates are hurting us. He himself is fine". Or Interviewee 55 believed: "I believe we have cultural, economic and political problems in this country, which has a good leader. We should support the supreme leader and we should also have qualified people to manage the country's affairs". Some other interviewees believed that any other alternative for ruling the country makes the situation worse; thus they assumed that the current supreme leader is proper for Iran. For instance Interviewee 49 stated: "I do not have any problem with the supreme leader or the Islamic state, because I know any alternative would have its

own problems.” This shows that the concept of sovereignty and supreme leadership complement each other in people’s minds.

Some other interviewees, considering the current situation in the region, believed that the current supreme leader, by his actions, has brought security for the country. For example Interviewee 24 stated: “We need a leader. If we did not have the supreme leader our situation would be insecure like that of other countries in the region”. Or Interviewee 63 believed: “We have security in the Islamic Republic, which is the most important factor. So, political issues and such stuff are nonsense. We owe security in this country to the supreme leader”. Or Interviewee 82 stated: “We have security in the country, the security that no other country in the region has. It indicates that the Islamic Republic’s policies and actions by the supreme leader are right”. These kinds of statements and positions are related to the notion of “insight”. Indeed, interviewees that made these statements believe that security in the country is the outcome of good leadership. The notion of “insight” as we discussed before, is related to conspiracies of enemies. The person who has insight is not fooled by the enemy’s conspiracies. The IRdisc, considering the insecure situation in the region and neighbouring countries like Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, could convince people that if we have security in the country, it is the consequence of good leadership of the current supreme leader. Therefore those speaking about Iran’s security and consider this security as the outcome of good leadership by the current supreme leader have insight and were not fool by the enemy’s conspiracies. At least that’s what the Islamic Republic wants people to think in this case.

Therefore the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifier of “sovereignty” and “insight” can be considered as the preferred meaning of the subjects that made the above statements. The position taken by the subjects is the Islamic Republic discourse’s ideal subject position.

It is worth mentioning that none of interviewees considered the role of the supreme leader as the transcendental or metaphysical role which has been given to the supreme leader. All of them mentioned functions of supreme leadership. This means that the IRdisc after experiencing the legitimacy crisis after the presidential election in 2009, hasn’t tried to prefer its desired meaning regarding the nodal point of the IRdisc. Nonetheless this discourse has tried to prefer its desired meaning regarding signifiers

that could keep the nodal point safe from being dislocated. The signifiers that the IRdisc has tried to prefer in its desired meaning regarding the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series are more ideological than the other two signifiers in the "*Shams-ol Emareh*" and the "Condition White" TV series. Therefore, the IRdisc instead of preferring its desired meaning regarding these signifiers, has tried to demonstrate the function of accepting the subject positions that have been represented in "*Mukhtar Nameh*". This action by the IRdisc makes sure the nodal point remains safe from being dislocated, because it stands in its mythical form by not being defined. The IRdisc has clarified its ideal subject positions and in contradiction, the position of "others" is illustrated by the Islamic Republic in very negative terms. Consequently this discourse has tried to determine what happens to people who accepted the position of "others". Therefore even in this category, which is the category of acceptance of the preferred subject positions of the IRdisc, we see no ideological statements by the interviewees. That is, the interviewees just simply mention their acceptance of the desired subject positions of the IRdisc.

Statements by interviewees that have been categorised under this category are demonstrating acceptance of the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc. In the analysis of the next categories I will examine if not accepting these subject positions by people could lead to the loss of hegemony for the IRdisc.

Second Category: Floating Signifier

Interviewees that have made statements under this category relate the issue of supreme leadership to the notion of politics. Accordingly these statements are demonstrating that interviewees have no clear position regarding the notion of politics. It means that they don't believe that talking about politics would be beneficial in order to solve the country's problems. Thus statements under this category are not clarifying the position of interviewees regarding the supreme leader. Although these statements contain no sign of any identification with rival and marginalised meanings to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc, but they do not accept the ideal subject positions of this discourse. It seems that interviewees under this category are indifferent to the notion of politics and also see the issue of supreme leadership in the Islamic Republic state as a different issue than politics. Statements under this category

are showing that interviewees have other priorities rather than politics to be concerned about.

Fifty-eight statements by 29 interviewees have formed this category, which comes out to 32.22% of all 90 interviewees and 180 statements. Among the statements that have formed this category, two major positions stand out. The first one, by avoiding talking about supreme leadership and politics, believe that the main problem in Iran is not politics and the supreme leader, but the country's bad financial condition. The C-2-1 table in the appendices shows the statements that consider the economy as the main problem in the country and see talking about politics and the supreme leadership irrelevant.

These statements are containing no signs of accepting the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the signifiers of "sovereignty", "insight" and "*velayat-madari*" by interviewees. Most of the interviewees avoid talking about these issues and believed that these are political issues that they have no comment on. Alternatively they believe that the economy matters instead of politics and if the financial conditions get better, then other political issues don't matter. For instance Interviewee 34 stated: "I do not think about the supreme leader and the like. If you had money, you would have everything. The regime should be economically reformed. If the economy improves, then culture would get fixed". Or Interviewee 73 believed: "Politics is not an issue right now, but our economy needs to be fixed. Comparing to other countries in the region, our political situation is very good. Our problem is the economy; political concerns are useless". Or Interviewee 38 stated: "If you acquire money, politics and culture would get fixed. When financial issues get solved, political and cultural problems would drop. I have nothing to do with politics; our problem is the economy".

These statements are demonstrating that interviewees have no preferred meaning regarding to the signifier of politics in general. Although the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the mentioned signifiers are not hegemonic among this kind of positioning by interviewees, what is important is that these kinds of positioning do not identify themselves with other or rival discourses regarding the signifier of politics. It means that in the identification process of these interviewees, the issue of supreme leadership and all signifiers related to this concept are floating signifiers, since specific preferred meanings haven't been related to them. Thus the importance of this kind of

positioning for the IRdisc is that people are not identifying themselves with rival discourses in regard to this signifier of politics. This is beneficial for the IRdisc in order to remain the hegemonic discourse. Because on the one hand its subjects are not denying its preferred meanings and on the other hand they are not adopting the position of “others” either.

Interviewees that have made statements under this category see the concept of politics apart from the economy and this means that they are depoliticised. For instance Interviewee 83 stated: “I work a lot and I need to have a comfortable life. I am not a man of politics; I do not care about it. All people including me, have financial problems, it has nothing to do with politics”. Or Interviewee 79 believed: “The issue is not politics; I have nothing to do with politics. My main concern is economy, I want to travel abroad once a year and I need something to do in order to do so”. Or Interviewee 01 stated: “I have no comment on supreme leadership; the economic situation has affected the culture and spirituality in this country. If the economy works, we would not have political problems”.

As I have argued in the data analysis related to the signifier of the 60s, the IRdisc prefers its subjects to be depoliticised instead of disagreeing with Islamic Republic’s positions. Therefore the kind of positioning that belongs to this category is well-suited for keeping the IRdisc hegemonic. Because subjects are not blaming the Islamic republic state’s actions and decisions, rather they see other elements important in even having bad living conditions. And they don’t relate these elements to the politics and consequently the ideological meanings of the IRdisc remain safe from being deconstructed.

The second kind of positioning is, similar to first, about being depoliticised. Interviewees that have made statements in the C-2-2 table in the appendices also don’t care about politics and see culture as the matter that needs reform and change. Also in statements under this category, interviewees see culture separate from politics and blame people for its shortcomings. For example Interviewee 03 stated: “These days, all people are hypocritical and deceptive. They change their mind, depending on where they stand. The problem of our country is not theocracy and supreme leadership. People make the problems”. Or Interviewee 07 believed: “Our people are all about pleasure and idleness, it has nothing to do with the regime and theocracy,

and they lack humanistic values. We used to see positive characteristics everywhere. People have become fools, a bunch of indifferent fools!” or Interviewee 52 stated: “We do not have political problems, I mean, we have but they are not important comparing to the fact that our people’s culture is a mess. In a culture where rich people are thieves, do you believe political protest works?”

Again in these statements we can see that interviewees by mentioning concepts like robbery, greed, money worshiping, etc. are blaming people and they don’t recognise any link between what they call politics and culture. Again the Islamic Republic’s subjects here are so depoliticised, since not only do they have no intention to question the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc but also consider issues related to politics as irrelevant matters in constructing conditions of their social life.

If we consider the situation of the IRdisc after the presidential election of 2009 and the legitimacy crisis which occurred because of political rather than economic issues, then the main question for the IRdisc is how to get out of this crisis. The IRdisc as I have argued in analysis of the first category, hasn’t tried to define the nodal point of the discourse in order to be the hegemonic discourse. Rather the efforts of this discourse were about depoliticising subjects. In analysing this category, we saw that the signifier of politics (as interviewees called it) could be considered as a floating signifier in the process of subject’s identification, which means no preferred meaning has been assigned to it. If the concept of politics becomes a floating signifier in the identification process of subjects, then the IRdisc has reached its aim in depoliticising subjects.

In analysing this category, I have tried to emphasise how interviewees in facing the concept of supreme leadership and also the current supreme leader and in general in facing the concept of politics are indifferent and see other issues like economy and culture as more important and also consider these issues as separate from politics. Hence these subjects became depoliticised and this is ideal for the IRdisc to deal with its major legitimacy crisis, which was political. In the analysis of the next category I will mention the other way that the IRdisc could make its subjects depoliticised.

Third Category: Rejecting the Position of “Others”

Statements that have formed this category are showing the complete refusal of interviewees to make comments about politics. Interviewees that formed this category

see the concept of supreme leadership and consequently signifiers that the IRdisc has tried to prefer its desired meaning regarding them in the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series, as political issues. They rejected the idea of making any comments about political issues. Thirty-four interviewees, namely 37.77% of all interviewees, rejected making any sort of political statements. The C-3 table in appendices shows statements that have been categorised under this third category.

The phrase "I am not into politics" is the common phrase that has been repeated in most statements. The main question here is why interviewees don't want to make comments about politics. The possible reasons are: they are satisfied with the current political situation in Iran, or they see other issues more important than politics, or they see consequences in speaking about politics and they want to avoid these consequences. Unlike the previous category, interviewees that made statements under this category did not believe that other issues are more important than politics and unlike the first category they were not satisfied with the current political situation. Nonetheless they avoided talking and making comments about politics, because most of them were thinking that getting into politics has consequences and a price to pay and they didn't want to pay that price. For instance, Interviewee 14 stated: "I am not into politics, because I am not ready to pay its price. There is no use in objecting to this regime or to the supreme leadership. You only have to pay the price for your opposition". Or Interviewee 25 believed: "I am not into politics, I follow the news but I am not ready to pay any price. Anyone, based on his capability should do as he can to reform the country. I have no capability". Or Interviewee 50 said: "I am not into politics, in my opinion people do not want to get involved in politics, because there is a price to pay".

These kinds of statements demonstrate that interviewees have been convinced that talking about politics and having a position regarding political matters like the supreme leader, leads to paying a price. Nonetheless the question is why do they think so?

We can seek the answer in the Islamic Republic's actions in the construction of "others". Interviewees that made the above statements had a fear of being punished and paying the price for being political. This fear has emerged in the interviewees' minds because of the process of making "others" by the repressive state apparatuses of the IRdisc. As I have mentioned in the theoretical parts, Gramsci argued that

hegemony is a combination of the two elements of satisfaction and repression. The IRdisc after experiencing its legitimacy crisis during and after the presidential election of 2009, in order to remain hegemonic, needed to use both of these elements. In the analysis of the two other popular TV series, I have argued that the concern over the IRdisc was to make satisfaction among its subjects in accepting its preferred meanings. I concluded that this discourse was successful in making this satisfaction among the Tehranian middle class for the signifier of “woman” and “the 60s”.

Nonetheless in facing the third signifier, the IRdisc has tried to create distance between its subjects and what they call politics. In this category we can see that this distance has been made because interviewees don’t want to make comments about politics. The position of “others” has worked here as a constitutive outside. It means that the actions of the IRdisc by the mediation of its repressive state apparatuses, has led people to avoid being “others” to avoid being punished by the repressive state apparatuses. Interviewees who have made statements under this category, see being political as the reason for the repression. During the aftermath of the events of the presidential election of 2009, they have seen what has happened to people who were political in the sense that they define politics. They have seen that political persons have been punished and eliminated. Therefore they were convinced that getting into politics (namely making comments about the supreme leader and sovereignty) is dangerous for them. So the IRdisc by using the element of repression could avoid its subjects from intending to deconstruct the preferred meanings of this discourse, which are close to the nodal point of this discourse and consequently make them depoliticised because of the fear of repression. For instance Interviewee 74 stated: “I am not into politics and do not think about this stuff, I want to earn a minimum income to live. This very supreme leader is a pure dictator, but who dare say it? They will catch you and send you to *Kahrizak*” (The notorious jail of 2009). Or Interviewee 09 said: “I am not into politics at all. In 2009, I joined the protests till 15 June; then I got scared and quit.” Or Interviewee 14 believed: “Politics has no meaning in this country, since if you speak about politics, you will go to prison”.

This fear of being repressed led to the emergence of two kinds of positioning regarding the notion of politics. Both of them are ideal for the IRdisc in making depoliticised subjects in antagonism with the “others” position. The first position sees the politics as

belonging to the politicians. For instance Interviewee 43 stated: “Politics is for politicians; I have another job. We should find a practical way to practice politics, because in this country political activism is impossible, it is better to stay silent”. Or Interviewee 76 said: “I am not into politics, but it is not possible for all to be indifferent; someone—I mean politicians—should do something”. And the other position defines politics by using concepts like “nasty” and “ugly” and sees politics as a matter that is not worth paying a price for. For instance Interviewee 31 stated: “Politics is ugly; I have nothing to do with it. I do not care about the supreme leader and such, because I am not ready to pay the price. Change in politics, do not change your life”. Or Interviewee 50 believed: “Politics is ugly and nasty. I have nothing to do with the supreme leader. Whoever he is, I do not care”. Or Interviewee 81 believed: “What is the use of politics? Politics is nasty, some pay the price and nothing changes at the end”.

Therefor the IRdisc, by using the element of repression, could make a distance between its subjects and politics. This making of distance has made the preferred meanings of the IRdisc secure from dislocation and temporarily eliminated the emergence of the other potential meanings regarding the signifiers of “sovereignty”, “insight” and “*velayat-madari*” which were considered as political issues by interviewees.

Therefore the positions of interviewees under this category are consistent with what the IRdisc desires. This category has been formed as a result of the repressive actions of the IRdisc in order to depoliticise its subjects in by punishing and eliminating people who were political.

Fourth Category: The Positions of “Others”

Statements under this category demonstrate the refusal of the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the concept of supreme leadership. Eighteen statements by nine interviewees have been categorised under this category. Namely only 10% of all interviewees made statements that clearly demonstrate the acceptance of subject positions of “others” rather than the ideal subject position of the IRdisc. The C-4 table in the appendices shows these statements.

Interviewees that stated statements under this category have taken a position regarding the notion of supreme leadership, which is considered as the position of “others” by the IRdisc. Because they didn’t accept the position of supreme leader as represented in “*Mukhtar Nameh*” TV series and were not afraid to speak politics, despite fear of being repressed. They have a clear position regarding notions of supreme leadership and this position is not consistent with the ideals of IRdisc. For instance, Interviewee 10 stated: “If the state let people live as they desire and have their own lifestyle, everyone would be satisfied. The current supreme leader is a dictator and he forces people to accept his idea about everything”. Or Interviewee 57 believed: “I personally believe the current supreme leader is the main factor that has caused insoluble problems in the country. He has to go and then people can decide freely how they want to live. The problem of this country is dictatorship”. Mentioning the concept of dictatorship and relating this concept to the current supreme leader of Iran, means that interviewees have chosen other potential meanings regarding the signifier of supreme leader, which the IRdisc has tried to marginalise. It means that signifiers of “sovereignty”, “insight” and “*velayat-madari*” haven’t been related to the concept of supreme leadership by these interviewees on the one hand and on the other hand they don’t see talking about these concepts and supreme leadership as irrelevant. Interviewees that have made the above statements by having different concerns believed that the current supreme leader is not doing well in serving the country. For instance Interviewee 10 by having the concern of freedom stated: “I am not into politics, but I believe we should have freedom of speech, freedom in clothing and freedom in the film industry and media”. Also Interviewee 19 by mentioning the same concept believed: “It would be great if we had freedom of speech alongside supreme leadership. We need to reform; another revolution has many dangers and casualties”. What seems obvious in these statements is that although the interviewees are opposing the current conditions of supreme leadership in Iran, but they don’t believe that the regime or the supreme leader should collapse. Nonetheless they believe in reform, even with the current supreme leader. For example Interviewee 16 stated: “Whatever this regime is, it must be reformed. Because as soon as they go away, someone worse would come and rule”. Or Interviewee 44 believed: “At the end of the day, this society needs reform. If this regime collapses, foreigners would take its

place and they are worse. So, the current regime should be reformed". The reason that these statements even have been made by interviewees, who opposed the current supreme leader, is that the IRdisc was successful in preferring its desired meaning regarding the signifier of insight even among people who are opposing the current supreme leader. As I argued the signifier of insight is related to not accepting the conspiracies of enemies. And enemy in this sense could be known as rival discourses, which aimed to deconstruct the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and collapse this discourse. During the interviews only two statements by Interviewees 26 and 64 called for the collapse of the Islamic Republic state: "I would like this regime and its supreme leader to collapse, but who can help? I am not ready to pay any price for this cause". And Interviewee 64: "I totally disagree with supreme leadership and Islamic state, I think these are forms of dictatorship and have to go... the circumstance matters, if the circumstance is in a way that a protest does not lead to violence, you should protest then." Nonetheless as it is obvious, again because of fear of being repressed and paying prices for the collapse, even these interviewees don't want to pay any prices in order to make changes.

Therefore, the IRdisc again is remaining secure from facing deconstruction regarding its ideological signifiers even from people who are clearly opposing the current supreme leader, since either they believe in reform or don't want to pay any price for the collapse. Therefore, the IRdisc even with people, who don't accept to be placed in the ideal subject positions of this discourse, is not facing any threat of collapse or deconstruction. Nonetheless this discourse was successful in marginalising rival discourses and rival preferred meanings in relation to the notion of supreme leadership and politics. Antagonist forces with the IRdisc are usually not strong enough to make any trouble for the hegemony of the IRdisc. Also, these forces, as we saw in analysing this and the previous category, are beneficial for the IRdisc in order to define ideological red-lines and create fear of repression among subjects of this discourse.

Conclusion

The concern of this research in this part was examining if preferred meanings of the IRdisc in regard to signifiers of "sovereignty", "insight" and "*velayat-madari*" are hegemonic among the Tehranian middle class or not. The IRdisc through the "*Mukhtar*

Nameh” TV series has represented its ideal subject position in relation to the mentioned signifiers. As I have argued before, these subject positions are related to the supreme leader position more than they are related to the preferred meanings of the IRdisc. Therefore, during interviews in this part I have tried to grasp what is the position of the interviewee in relation to notions of supreme leadership and the current supreme leader. This could help me understand if the Tehranian middle class has been placed in the ideal subject position of the IRdisc or not. It is worth mentioning that in analysing this part, there was the consideration of the “others” position. Namely, if interviewees just have rejected the position of “others”, although they were not the ideal subjects of the IRdisc, but with consideration of the nature of hegemony that contains two elements of satisfaction and repression, not being placed in the position of “others” because of the fear of being repressed, makes the IRdisc hegemonic. During interviews and among 90 interviewees and 180 highlighted statements, four major categories have been obtained. The table below shows these categories and the numbers and percentages of interviewees that placed in each category.

Category		Numbers of interviewees	Numbers of statements	Percentage
1	Ideal subject positions	18	36	20%
2	Floating signifiers	29	58	32.22%
3	Rejecting the position of “others”	34	68	37.77%
4	The position of “others”	9	18	10%
Total		90	180	100%

The first category shows the consistency between interviewees’ positions and the ideal subjects positions of the IRdisc that have been represented in the “*Mukhtar Nameh*” TV series. The second category shows that interviewees have not made clear the position regarding the ideal subjects’ positions on the IRdisc. Statements that have been categorised under this category are not demonstrating any sign of accepting the position of “others”. Interviewees that have stated these statements believed that other issues are more important than politics in the current situation of Iran. They believed “economy” and “culture” are more important issues to talk about.

Nevertheless, these interviewees didn't relate these issues to what they called politics (speaking about supreme leadership). Therefore, I have argued that because the position that these interviewees have taken in regard to the notion of supreme leadership and the current supreme leader, they have been not represented as the position of others, although these interviewees and their positions cannot be considered as the ideals of the IRdisc, but this discourse doesn't see this kind of position as the positions of "others". This kind of taking positions is beneficial for the IRdisc in order to be the hegemonic discourse because then it would have no possibility for deconstruction of the preferred meaning of this discourse.

The third category demonstrates the rejection of the position of "others" by the interviewees. Here and in analysing this category the element of repression becomes very important. Interviewees that have made statements under the third category refused to make comments on what they called politics because they have been convinced that talking about politics could make them repressed. Here the repressive state apparatuses of the IRdisc made people convinced that talking about politics and being placed in the positions that are known as the position of "others" by the IRdisc could make them pay a price that they don't want to pay. As I have argued, according to Gramsci, hegemony is a combination of "satisfaction" and "repression". The IRdisc after experiencing the legitimacy crisis of 2009, has used its repressive state apparatuses to secure its ideological signifiers from dislocation and deconstruction. Although interviewees that made statements under this category didn't identify themselves with the preferred meaning of the IRdisc regarding the mentioned signifiers and didn't take the ideal subjects' positions of the IRdisc, but they also didn't identify themselves with rival discourses and other possible meanings regarding the notion of supreme leadership and the current supreme leader. Perhaps this was because of the fear repression. Therefore, the process of making "others" by the IRdisc has helped this discourse not lose its hegemony and has made people not accept or not identify themselves with the positions of "others" who have been repressed during the legitimacy crisis of the IRdisc.

The fourth category demonstrates the rejection of the ideal subject position of the IRdisc in relation to the notion of supreme leadership. Interviewees that made statements under this category not only reject being placed in the ideal subjects'

positions, but also have accepted the position of others regarding the notion of supreme leadership and the current supreme leader. Nonetheless, most of them believed in reform more than the collapse of the Islamic Republic state.

In conclusion I can say that according to what I have argued in the analysis of each category, the first three categories demonstrate that interviewees have taken positions in relation to represented positions in the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series, which are acceptable and ideal for the IRdisc. The first category is the ideal for the IRdisc and the other two categories are acceptable since they show the Islamic Republic subjects as depoliticised and this leads to safety for the Islamic Republic's preferred meanings.

It means that among interviewees only 10% have taken positions, which are not ideal or acceptable by the IRdisc, and 90% are consistent with the ideas of IRdisc. Thus the IRdisc is the hegemonic discourse among the Tehranian middle class, in preferring its desired meanings regarding the signifiers and subject positions that have been represented in the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the demand for political participation and political freedom have been suppressed within subjectivities of members of the Tehranian middle class. As mentioned in the chapter on the Tehranian middle class, these demands have always been significant in the subjectivity of the middle class and have caused various cultural and political transformations within Iranian society. Nonetheless, the IRdisc in order to be hegemonic, could eradicate this demand within the middle class subjectivities by making constitutive outsides (others) versus its ideal subject positions. This led to emergence of the depoliticized characteristic among subjectivities of the middle class and causes neglecting the significance of the notion of politics (as interviewees called it) and consequently having no intention in questioning meanings that belongs to this notion. Arguably, as I will mention in the conclusion chapter, the development of the depoliticized characteristic among the middle class subjectivities is beneficial for the IRdisc not only in overcoming the crisis, but also in advancing its articulation in various realms of the everyday life.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore to what extent the IRdisc can be considered the hegemonic discourse in fashioning its desired form of subjectivity among the Tehranian middle class. Two main questions thus had to be answered by this research. First, what is the desired form of subjectivity that the IRdisc aspires to, and what aspects are the most important for this discourse in forming the subjectivities that are related to them? Second, to what extent has the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class been formed in relation to these preferred meanings and the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc?

In order to answer these questions, I have tried to explore the desired form of subjectivity in the IRdisc, through the study of productions from Iranian state television. During a historical analysis of the emergence and evolution of the Iranian television discourse since the revolution of 1979, I have argued that this ideological state apparatus has always represented the preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the IRdisc in different contextual circumstances. Studying the products of Iranian state television at different periods thus reveals the desired form of subjectivity that this discourse is seeking to form. I have focused on the three most popular TV series, which were broadcast by Iranian state television from 2009 until the end of 2013, and I suggest that these TV series represent the ideal subject positions and preferred meanings of the IRdisc in the contextual circumstances that pertained after the emergence of the Green Movement in 2009.

Additionally, the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class was the subject of consideration in this research; since this modern middle class in Iran, which emerged under the influence of Reza Shah's modernisation process, has always played a major role in forming social movements and establishing social changes and reforms during recent years. The role of this class is recognisable in the advancing of Reza Shah's modernisation process, in the establishing of social changes and reforms during the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah, in forming the Iranian revolution of 1979, and also in the post-revolutionary changes of the Islamic Republic's state like establishment of the IRdisc during the 60s, preceding the demands of the Reconstructionist Cabinet after

the war, electing a Reformist Cabinet in 1997, and also in the election of the Principlist Cabinet in 2005, by boycotting the 2005 presidential election. In contemporary Iranian history, the occurrences of major social changes and reforms have always become possible through the mediation of the middle class. As I have discussed in the section on the middle class, in this contemporary history, all of the regimes have also been faced with major defeats when this middle class stopped supporting them and started protesting against them for its demands.

During this research, in three chapters, I have tried to present a narration of the transformations of the Islamic Republic's discursive articulations and the relation of the subjectivity of the modern middle class with the different articulations of this discourse. In the theoretical chapter, following the framework of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, four forms of the IRdisc articulations have been mentioned regarding different contextual circumstances since the revolution of 1979. Islamist Leftist, Economic Development, Reformist and Principlist articulations, are the four major forms of the IRdisc articulations. During chapter three, I tried first to relate these dominant articulations in each period to the represented preferred meanings and ideal subject positions of the IRdisc on Iranian state television. Consequently, in the chapter on the Tehranian Middle Class, the role of this middle class in advancing each articulation has been discussed. In this chapter, these articulations have been discussed with the mediation of governments and cabinets of each period as representatives of each articulation. The cabinet during the war-time, as the representative of the Islamic-leftist articulation, took an anti-capitalist and anti-Western position, The Constructionist Cabinet, as the representatives of the Economic Development articulation that transformed the political economy of the IRdisc, the Reformist Cabinet as the representative of the Reformist or Political Development articulation that transformed the cultural structure of the society, and the Principlist Cabinet as the representative of the Principlist articulation, which is currently the dominant articulation, were discussed. Consequently, the relations of the middle class with these cabinets and articulations have been elaborated upon. Moreover, the political economy of each cabinet, according to their significant signifiers, has been discussed.

Nonetheless, as I have argued, during the Reformist Cabinet period, a serious split emerged among the politically active forces of the Islamic Republic's state. This break emerged in consequence of the highlighting of the Republican face, or Islamist face, of the IRdisc. Principlists stood on the side of Islamism and Reformists on the side of Republicanism. As a result of the intensification of the struggle between these two forces, after the presidential election of 2009, the reformists were eliminated from the realm of politics, and the Principlist articulation became the dominant articulation of the IRdisc, the Reformist articulation thus becoming the rival discourse. The main principle of this articulation is the recognition of principles according to the demands and desires of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

In addition, this break was detected in the Iranian television discourse and it is argued that this ideological state apparatus has always supported the Principlist articulation since the unfolding of the split during the Reformist Cabinet period.

As a result of what has been discussed, I can conclude that since the 1979 revolution, the IRdisc, first took an anti-capitalist position, as a rival to Marxism, by emphasising the nature of Islam as the ideology of resistance against both capitalism and the West, especially the US. After the end of the war, many revolutionaries, who constituted the Constructionist Cabinet, highlighted economic development and distanced themselves from the so called anti-capitalist position in their economic policies; yet they emphasised Islamic ideological values. Here, the point is that the Islamism within the IRdisc has been transformed from an ideology of resistance to an ideology of the state. Due to this, the Reformist cabinet, since it emphasised liberal values, like civil society, democracy, public sphere, etc., which were not tolerated by the Principlists and the Supreme Leader, as the representative of the Islamic ideology within the IRdisc.

Nonetheless, as argued in the section on the middle class, the IRdisc, after the elimination of the Reformists, by emphasising privatisation and by taking advantage of the increase in oil revenues, was articulated in such a way that, on one hand, it highlighted ideological values, and, on the other hand, it was expanding a kind of consumerist culture in relation to the increase in the semi-private sectors, which were supported by the government. The Principlist government spent the state budget from oil revenue to construct shopping centres and import commodities with the mediation of the semi-private sectors. This meant that an Islamic capitalism, or Islamic

bourgeoisie, with a particular interpretation of sharia as its ideology emerged. However, the question is, what could conjoin the Islamic ideology to the capitalist consumerism that was based on oil revenue? The answer is the new middle class. This discourse therefore needs this middle class as the mediator to conjoin Islamism to consumerism within the IRdisc. The characteristics of a subjectivity that this discourse demands is expanded among the middle class is significant for the IRdisc in two ways; first, by overcoming the dislocation, and, second, by advancing its political economy. In 2009, after the presidential election, the Islamic Republic's state faced the emergence of the "Green Movement". This movement claimed there was fraud in the election results and demanded a return of their votes—their main slogan being "Where is my vote?" As is obvious, this demand is a very political demand and seeks enhanced political participation. One of the main demands of the middle class in criticising and also protesting against political regimes has always been their desire for more political participation. This demand has always caused serious costs to political regimes, for instance, during the Islamic Republic era, this class caused the main political transformation, namely, the emergence and empowerment of the Reformist articulation, which is no longer tolerated by the IRdisc.

The IRdisc, in facing the Green Movement which targeted its legitimacy, had no other choice than to either take action in order to establish serious changes and reforms in its articulation according to demands of the protesters, or to repress the movement and then form a kind of subjectivity among this middle class that may lead to the security of the IRdisc through facing more dislocations, aimed at deconstructing its preferred meanings.

Adapting the first choice required the acceptance of the claims of the protesters about fraud in the election and, obviously, the state, did not choose this way since none of its officials ever admitted the possibility of fraud in the 2009 election. The Islamic Republic's state therefore adopted the second choice.

The IRdisc, in order to frustrate these demands forever and to secure itself from facing dislocation through the mediation of the middle class, which might lead to losing the discursive hegemony, tried to expand its desired form of subjectivity among this class. This subjectivity had to be formed in order to meet two purposes, first, to be consistent with the political economy of the Principlist articulation, and, second, not to

question the legitimacy of this discourse, which was more ideological than ever through the domination of the Principlist articulation and the centrality of the Supreme Leader.

Accordingly, this discourse needed, first, to alter the demands of the middle class from political to non-political demands that did not question the hegemony of the IRdisc, and, second, to benefit from this subjectivity by advancing its economy, which is, more than ever, based on consumerism.

During this research, I have tried to understand what aspects in the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class are the most significant for the IRdisc in order that its desired meanings are preferred by them and form a kind of subjectivity for this class, which meets the mentioned purposes. I have explored and found these aspects and their significant signifiers in the Iranian state television's products. In fact, I have studied three of the most popular TV series from this apparatus in the four years after the 2009 presidential election, to explore what the preferred meanings and desired subject positions of the Islamic Republic's discourse are after they faced this dislocation, and relating the signifiers that these meanings and subject positions have represented. In analysing the three most popular TV series from summer 2009 to winter 2013, I have inferred that the IRdisc aimed to promote its meanings and represent its ideal subject positions regarding three signifiers of: "women", "the 60s" and "sovereignty". During the analysis of each TV series, according to Hall's thoughts in considering strategies of representation, I have realised that a preference for the desired meanings of the IRdisc and the interpellation of subjects regarding the represented subject positions in each TV series, have different functions for the IRdisc so that it can remain the hegemonic discourse.

Regarding the signifier of woman, through the "*Shams-ol Emareh*" TV series, the IRdisc was seeking to make a stereotype, which represented and gave preference to the meaning of "mother-wife". Regarding the signifier of "the 60s", this discourse, in the "*Condition White*" TV series, tried to form the social imagination by representing a myth of the emergence of social cohesion and a richness of meanings during this decade. Regarding the signifiers for "sovereignty", "insight" and "*velayat-madari*", in the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series, this discourse, by representing the subject position of "others", has tried to make clear what its ideal subject positions are, and what the

positions of others are, and also what will happen if people are placed in the subject positions of others. The “other-making” in this series is mostly done in relation to the position of the Supreme Leader. The mentioned signifiers can thus be considered as the most significant signifiers in the IRdisc, since this discourse has represented its preferred meanings and ideal subject position relating to them when it was experiencing a dislocation.

Through conducting interviews with members of the Tehranian middle class, I have tried to understand whether these preferred meanings form the subjectivity of this class, or is this done by discourses other than the IRdisc, which thus become hegemonic in forming their subjectivity. During data analysis of the interviews conducted, according to categories that were obtained from the interviews, I have concluded that all of the preferred meanings and desired subject positions of the IRdisc regarding the mentioned signifiers and aspects of everyday life, can be considered as part of the hegemonic meanings among this middle class. This means that the desired form of subjectivity in the IRdisc, is the hegemonic one among the Tehranian middle class.

In regard to the signifier of women, the subjectivity of this class indicates the acceptance of the role of “mother-wife” for women more than any of the other roles that women can take in society. This preferred meaning reduces the role of women to just being mothers or wives, and it ignores other potential meanings that could define the roles of women. Making this stereotype in regard to the signifier of woman, on one hand, causes the elimination of this group from serious social activities, and, on the other hand, it makes the subjects of the IRdisc homogenous in accepting this cliché. The elimination of women from being determinant in social and political matters, by reducing their role to being mothers and wives, leads to the elimination of a group that potentially could have political demands for gender justice and political participation. Constructing subjectivities according to this ideal subject position for woman, in the articulation of the IRdisc, will cause the depoliticising of half of Iranian society, since their ideal role is defined, as being mothers and wives, and this meaning is arguably hegemonic among this class. When the role of women is defined by their being mothers and wives, consequently, as we saw in the interview data, the role of men will be as the providers for their families. Men’s acceptance of this role also leads to more

effort from this gender group in order to gain more money and to provide for the family, since the contribution of women in this provision is not considered to be one of the duties of women. This also may cause the assiduity of men in making more financial efforts to provide for the family, rather than their attention to political concerns. Stereotype making by discourses make a society homogenous and leads to an ignorance of matters that cause gender injustice and inequality.

Regarding the signifier of the 60s, the Tehranian middle class has accepted the myth that the IRdisc has represented through this signifier. Representing this myth has led to the establishment of a social imagination in the minds of this middle class, which sees the IRdisc as being what has constructed the pleasant living situation during the 60s. In considering today's situation, losing the social cohesion and richness of meanings during the 60s, members of the middle class are not blaming the state, rather, they blame themselves, since they have become greedy or demand a luxurious lifestyle, or they blame technology for losing such social cohesion and richness of meaning. The main concern of this class, in their current situation, is financial, according to the interview data, but they do not see the state as being the reason for their dissatisfaction with their financial condition. Rather, according to the constructed social imagination of the IRdisc, they blame people for losing the ideal conditions of the 60s. Accepting this social imagination through the representation of a myth of social cohesion and a richness of meanings has naturalised the current articulation of the IRdisc, and the subjects of this discourse see no defect in the current articulation of it in losing the conditions of the 60s. Again, the Islamic Republic discourse might prefer its desired meaning regarding the signifier of the 60s by making depoliticised subjects, who accept this social imagination. Since accepting this imagination naturalises the current situation and consequently the current social injustice and inequality, and considers the IRdisc as the sole source that could bring back the situation related to what was experienced during the 60s.

According to the ideal subject positions and preferred meanings of the IRdisc, represented in the "*Mukhtar Nameh*" TV series, the Tehranian middle class can also be considered as subjects of this discourse, since they do not identify themselves with any positions that have been considered to be the position of others. The ideal subject positions of the IRdisc in regard to the signifiers of "sovereignty", "insight" and

"velayat-madari" are recognisable in the *"Mukhtar Nameh"* TV series. Although, the ultimate goal of the IRdisc is to form subjectivities according to these ideal subject positions, subjects who identify themselves with these represented subject positions ideologically support the IRdisc. In other words, represented subject positions in the mentioned TV series, as I have argued, are ideological and are related to the ideological values of this discourse and, consequently, to the position of the Supreme Leader. Moreover, the emphasis of this TV series, on demonstrating the position of others, indicates that not identifying with the positions of others is also a desired form of subjectivity for the IRdisc. Again, the Tehranian middle class members have taken the desired position of the IRdisc, since the position of others has been clarified for them, and they have been convinced that accepting the preferred meanings of others regarding the mentioned signifiers leads to their elimination and suppression by suppressive state apparatuses. In taking positions in regard to the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc, and the preferred meanings of this discourse, this middle class mostly rejects being placed in the position of others determined for them. This means that members of this middle class mostly rejected speaking about the issues that they thought were related to what they call 'politics'. Again, the Tehranian middle class members are very depoliticised, since they are not willing to place themselves in the position of others by taking positions in political matters. The strategy of making a constitutive outside, or others, has worked for the IRdisc to distance its subjects from becoming others and so questioning its legitimacy and demanding political freedom.

I can thus conclude that the IRdisc is the hegemonic discourse in forming the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class regarding the signifiers that are most significant for this discourse since they could carry meanings for concepts of gender equality, social justice and political freedom. As a result of this hegemony in constructing the subjectivity of the middle class, this subjectivity contains reliable characteristics for the IRdisc so as to expand its articulation into other realms of everyday life. The main characteristic of this subjectivity, as obtained from analysis of the interview data, is a depoliticised characteristic.

In addition to the fact that the Tehranian middle class members, in the interviews, rarely took a position in regard to the notion of politics, or what they called politics, the represented preferred meanings of the IRdisc, have constituted the perceptions of

the interviewees in regard to the mentioned signifiers. This means that the IRdisc can eliminate other potential meanings in regard to signifiers, and so become the hegemonic discourse in constructing the subjectivities of the middle class. Consequently, members of the middle class rarely have the intention to question these meanings by highlighting other potential meanings in regard to the considered signifiers. If we consider politics as the principles for organising the institutions of a society, then the political challenges the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse to highlight the marginalised meanings of a signifier. Namely, attempts to re-articulate the hegemonic discourse and get rid of the pre-determined subject positions. Although, as mentioned, many interviewees were taking positions against the policies of the state, yet politics, in this sense, means the attempts of subjects to deconstruct the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse and to highlight the other potential meanings of a signifier. Nonetheless, the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class has been constructed so that there is no intention to re-articulate the meanings that have constructed their subjectivity, since either they accept these meanings as being inherent meanings, or as being affected by a myth, or as being afraid of their elimination and suppression.

The IRdisc could overcome the crisis by expanding this depoliticised form of subjectivity among the Tehranian middle class. The mentioned preferred meanings can be considered to be moments in the discursive articulation of the IRdisc, and this discourse can articulate its other preferred meanings in relation to these moments, by relying on the depoliticised characteristic of middle class subjectivity.

This research was an attempt to explore the desired form of subjectivity of the IRdisc, almost four years after the experiencing of the crisis, and to examine whether this form of subjectivity is hegemonic among the group that has caused this dislocation. The findings of this research, according to the interview data, demonstrate that the desired forms of subjectivity of the IRdisc, and the preferred meanings of this discourse regarding the signifiers that have been considered in this research, are hegemonic in constructing the subjectivity of the Tehranian middle class. Obviously, the IRdisc, apart from overcoming the dislocation, is seeking to take other benefits through making this kind of depoliticised subjectivity. This discourse is demanding to

seize the realm of everyday life by preferring its desired meanings regarding the different aspects of everyday life.

The findings of this research demonstrate that, in studying Iranian everyday life and examining the lifestyle in relation to the ideological values of the Islamic Republic's state, we need to consider that the IRdisc is more than an ideology, rather, it is a discourse that, according to the nature of discourses, is transforming its preferred meanings and representing different articulations of its preferred meanings in different contexts. Reaching the closure in the discourse's articulations is impossible and the fixed meanings of signifiers can be dislocated. As a result of this, discourses change their articulations according to contextual circumstances, and different signifiers, in facing different contextual circumstances, become significant in discursive articulations. Considering ideological values as meanings that construct the articulation of a discourse, means the lack of understanding about how the IRdisc forms its desired subjectivities.

Considering the IRdisc as more than an ideological formation, leads to highlighting the fact that the IRdisc may not demand the acceptance of its ideological values by the middle class, rather, this discourse desires to construct a kind of subjectivity among this class so as to be secure from meaning dislocation and also to take benefit, rather than being ideologically dominant.

What I am trying to say relates to the significance of going beyond the propaganda in the IRdisc, which highlights ideological values, in order to examine the lifestyle and the everyday life of the middle class. Thus, in considering different aspects of everyday life and lifestyle, for instance, fashion, consumption, cultural products, we should be able to track and map the articulatory practices of the IRdisc in order to reveal its desired form of subjectivity, instead of its propaganda in emphasising ideological values. If the propagandas of this discourse is considered without highlighting the articulatory practices and exploring the desired for subjectivity, then a fantasy of resistance against ideological values will be concluded within the lifestyle of the middle class, since this lifestyle has obviously been formed that is not consistent with the ideological codes of the IRdisc. This is the fantasy of resistance, which is also beneficial for the IRdisc in order that it should be hegemonic, since a kind of satisfaction accrues in the subjectivity of its subjects in resisting the ideological codes. However, their

subjectivities have been formed consistently with the desires of the IRdisc, since they do not question the preferred meanings in its articulatory practices, which may have been formed regardless of ideological values. The lifestyle of the middle class cannot therefore be considered as effective resistance, since it has been formed consistently to the subjectification of the IRdisc in order to construct depoliticised subjectivities.

Moreover, expanding this subjectivity could not only secure this discourse from collapsing and so reinforce its hegemony, but could also bring other benefits for this discourse through making depoliticised subjects. Everyday life, which has been depoliticised, is the proper realm for the emergence of profit seeking systems, which mostly seek financial interests, and the IRdisc, on one hand, needs these systems to expand the depoliticisation within the society, and, on the other hand, these systems are serving the political economy of the Islamic Republic's state.

A kind of collaboration has thus emerged between these systems and the IRdisc in depoliticising the realm of everyday life. Consequently, forms of lifestyles have emerged within everyday life, which may objectively be against the ideological values of the Islamic Republic's state, but work in the interest of the IRdisc by depoliticising the realm of everyday life. The number of shopping centres and malls in Tehran in 2009 was less than 25, however, by the end of 2012, 34 other shopping centres were under construction in this city. This dramatic increase is a sign of the recognition of a lifestyle by the IRdisc, which is not associated with its ideological values since it has consequences, which lead to the trivialisation of these values. Moreover, the amount of the state budget, mainly from oil revenues, which is spent on importing commodities, has been discussed in the section on the Tehranian middle class.

Furthermore, the expansion of fashion styles in the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class, or the emergence of a secular lifestyle among this class, does not mean that this class is resisting the hegemony of the IRdisc, rather, the potentials of this lifestyle should be explored, as this is revealing in order to disarticulate the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse. Although, this lifestyle does not match the ideological values of the IRdisc; the question is: has the desired form of subjectivity in this discourse, which it wishes to expand among the middle class, been formed in association with its ideological values? The answer seems to be no, according to the findings of this research.

It is true that the findings of this research are not comprehensive, since this research has not examined the hegemony of the IRdisc in relation to various, different aspects of everyday life. This examination definitely requires the study of the other ideological configurations that this discourse has generated, in order to ascertain the ideal subject positions of the IRdisc. Nonetheless, I have tried to narrow down the research's findings in regard to significant aspects of this everyday life. I believe that, in other forms of interpellation of the IRdisc, the desires of this discourse in constructing these depoliticised subjectivities are detectable through its articulatory practices, for instance, in apparatuses such as the educational and religious ones.

The present study is just a preliminary step in gaining a better knowledge of the multifaceted aspects of the discourse of the Islamic Republic and the subjectivities formed in relation to it. A broader understanding of different subjectivities formed in relation to the IRdisc requires further study of various subjectivities that are formed within the Islamic Republic and in relation to its discourse, such as the religious and non-religious intellectuals, political opposition movements such as the student movement, supporters of the Islamic Republic including the *Basij*, to name just a few. An assessment of the future of the Islamic Republic's state and its ability to overcome the future crises would necessitate a study of the IRdisc and also the discourse of these groups to see how these groups comply with the ideal subject positions and preferred meanings assigned to articulatory practices of the IRdisc.

In this research, the theoretical framework of discourse analysis by Laclau and Mouffe has been applied. This theoretical framework enables the researcher to study the dynamic relationship between power and discourse and also delineate the hegemonic relationship that exists between constituted and constitutive subjects. Application of this framework made it possible for me to examine the hegemony of the IRdisc by finding its preferred meanings from its forms of interpellation and representation. This examination has been carried out under the influence of the cultural studies approach, which considers the process of meaning construction in the realm of everyday life by mapping the articulatory practices of discourses, mostly through their cultural forms of representations, and examining the hegemony of this articulation by reference to the subjectivity of persons who could potentially be the subjects of different discourses.

The main attempt of this study was to argue that the desired form of subjectivity for the Tehranian middle class, in the IRdisc regarding the main signifiers of the studied TV series, is a hegemonic one among this class, and the main characteristic of this subjectivity is that the middle class are being depoliticised. Additionally, as I have argued, the Tehranian middle class's members are the subjects of the IRdisc, and therefore, subjectively, they are expanding the power of this discourse in the realm of everyday life through the mediation of other cultural products, such as music, film, novels, social networks, etc., which are not as much under the control of the state as the Iranian state television. I also believe that the discourse analysis of these media reveals that the middle class subjectively expands the depoliticised subjectivity, since, in most of them, there is no significant, recognisable attempt to deconstruct the preferred meanings of the IRdisc and to form an alternative subjectivity.

Thus, understanding how, and in relation to what signifiers, the IRdisc's preferred form of subjectivities is fashioned, brings the possibility for further research on this basis to explore what other benefits this discourse is gaining by expanding this kind of depoliticised subjectivity among the middle class, rather than just securing itself from dislocations. I believe that the expansion of this form of subjectivity is related to the transformations in the articulations of this discourse regarding the meanings that construct its approach to the notion of political economy and the emergence of the new petit-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. Accordingly, in this transformation, the IRdisc needs to motivate the middle class to become subjects of expanding its power. In fact, I believe the actuality of transformations within the articulations of IRdisc, were nothing other than a struggle over the formation and subjectification of the middle class. However, the proof of this claim requires additional research that may be undertaken on the basis of the present findings.

My intention in doing this research and in exploring the meanings that construct the everyday life of the Tehranian middle class, was to understand the condition of this everyday life "as it is", and this understanding would be the first step to bring out the hidden potentials of everyday life in order to reach the situation "as it should be". It seems impossible to highlight the other marginalised meanings of signifiers, which are the hidden potentials of everyday life to resist the domination, unless we explore which of the preferred meanings of the signifiers in the realm of everyday life are

hegemonic, and what kind of subjectivity, in favour of which discourse, these meanings are creating. This exploration is the first step in attempting to construct more just living conditions by being the subjects of a discourse, in which its preferred meanings might be articulated around the nodal point of justice and equality. Arguably, if the middle class could get rid of the depoliticised subjectivity, it could play a significant role in questioning the preferred meanings of the hegemonic discourse and in trying to re-articulate this discourse according to meanings that could empower civil society over the challenge to reach gender equality, social justice and political freedom. Currently, this middle class, unlike its historical role in advancing social changes and political reforms, is an apathetic class, since they have no intention to be political subjects in order to re-articulate the meanings that have constructed its subjectivity. What has been argued during this study is that the hegemony of the IRdisc constructs everyday life according to its preferred meanings and subjectification. However, this study, by revealing these preferred meanings and their functions for the IRdisc, and also by examining the hegemonic extent of these meanings, has tried to clarify the current conditions of this discourse. This revelation may bring the possibility of a beneficial and essential critique of the IRdisc according to its current articulation and problematic. Consequently, this critique brings the possibility to overcome the depoliticised subjectivities and to construct subjectivities that have concerns relating to equality justice and freedom.

APPENDICES

INTERVIEWEES' STATEMENTS

Section A

Interviewees' statements, which formed obtained categories in data analysing in regard to signifier of "Woman" in "*Shams-ol Emareh*" TV series.

Table: A-1

First Category: Fixed meanings/moments.

Num	Phrase
02	When a couple have children, then, the main duty of wife is upbringing children and she never should work outside the home.
02	Having a job for women, keeps them away from their main duty, which is being a mother.
03	Women are inherent mothers and they should act according to this feeling that god gave it to them.
03	All women have motherhood instinct and they cannot reject this feeling by working.
04	Based on motherhood feeling and motherly love, when a woman becomes a mother, she has to stay with her children.
04	The main duty of women is raising children and this will build the future of a society.
05	If a woman works outside the home, then she will be so exhausted that she cannot perform her duties in the home properly. Anyway, women have some duties in the home.
05	The maternal feeling is inherent in women and this feeling brings duties for them that no one can do. A mother has to stay with children all time and I think working outside the home is against this maternal feeling.
06	For the goodness of children and women, it is better for women to stay at home and not having a job outside the home.
06	A duty of woman is warming up the household atmosphere by doing household chores and well upbringing children.
09	If women spend all of their energy in the home, then the family foundation becomes stronger and this would be beneficial for women to avoid any failure in marriage or children upbringing.
09	The inherent motherhood instinct would cause women to want to stay at home when they have children.
10	I might think traditionally, but I believe a woman should spend all of her time in the home in order to nurture children very well.

10	A woman should manage her household chores of her own, maidservant or nannies never could do what a mother could do.
12	The maternal feeling is undeniable and working outside the home is against this feeling.
12	Maternal feeling is the best feeling in the world and it follows with duties that keep women away from working outside the home.
15	I am totally against the idea of women earning money, this is duty of men to earn money and be the providers for the household, and duty of women is to spend this money properly.
15	A woman must not work outside the home and should deal with house chores efficiently.
16	It is the duty of woman to be at home and be an ideal mother for her children, and provide a warm atmosphere at home for her husband.
16	A woman should be provided from all aspects to be able to handle household chores.
19	Women have some needs, financially and emotionally, and men must answer to those needs of women.
19	Women have needs that men have supply, both emotionally and financially.
23	Normally, women must do household chores and men must provide for the family.
23	Motherhood feeling is an inherent feeling which causes the emergence of duties for women, and working is not among these duties.
24	The motherhood feeling is very important and I think it was the base of women creation by god, so women should appreciate this feeling by doing duties that a mother has and surely earning money is not among these duties.
24	Upbringing children and maintaining the home is duties of women in families, because these are not consonant with men's nature. Men should provide and women should maintain the family.
29	There is no need for women to work outside the home, if they have been well provided financially by men. Women and men have different demands according to their nature and the most important demand of women is being good mothers for their children.
29	Housekeeping is a fulltime job for women. I think if they can properly do this job, then there is no need for them to work outside the home.
30	If a woman marries with true love, then she should spend her time to be a good wife and a good mother.
30	Women's duty is upbringing children and nothing else. Working keeps them away from their main duty.
34	The inherent feeling of motherhood that belongs to women, makes them to be comfortable with upbringing children.
34	If a man is honest with his wife about his income, the wife would manage his earnings and there would be no need for her to work outside the home.
37	I disagree with women working outside the home, working is not compatible with women's emotions.
37	In all societies, women must do household chores and men must provide for

	the family, it is the nature.
38	When a woman became a mother, then she should spend her time to nurture her children properly, working outside the home would lead the major failure in this duty.
38	The traditional role of women is raising children and this is good because this role is compatible with the nature of women.
39	Motherhood feeling is the most beautiful feeling in every woman and women should appreciate this feeling with spending all of their time with children.
39	Based on women's nature, they should spend all their time raising children and doing household chores.
40	It is duty of men to earn money for households, because men are stronger than women, both biologically and mentally.
40	Everything is better in its traditional form, women working outside the home, is against our traditions.
42	The inherent feeling of being a mother should be found in women's hearts, and when a woman has found it, then she does not want to have a career for her own sake.
42	I have just one word -and believe me- , experiences have proven this: women never should have a career outside the home.
44	It is the responsibility of women to satisfy emotional needs of a family and men should guide the family, therefore, I think it is better for both men and women to do their traditional and natural duties.
44	Based on the nature of women, automatically they desire to do the household chores and nurture the children.
45	Since women are less logical than men and their actions are more based on emotions, it is men's duty to guide the household, both making major decisions and also I think bringing money are duties of men. Women must not work outside the home.
45	The ideal role division between women and men is the traditional form, namely women in home and men outside the home.
46	If a woman works outside the home, her children are abandoned by themselves and they may become criminals. Even it is not appropriate for children to go to kindergarten, because it is the duty of a mother to train her children, not kindergarten teachers or mentors.
46	Everything is more beautiful in its traditional form, men work outside the home in order to provide for the family and women stay in the home to raise children and do household chores.
49	The history has proven that the role of women is housekeeping and mothering.
49	The ideal division is for both women and men to perform their traditional roles. Man should work outside the home and woman should do her maternal duties and housekeeping, this is better for both.
51	If a woman works outside the home then who should do household chores? I think families with working mothers have loads of problems and the home atmosphere would never be in its ideal form, because the woman is working and have no time to maintain the home.

51	Men should provide properly for the family in case of financial needs and this would keep women away from working and cause them to engage with their main duties in the home.
52	If men can support the family financially, then I am sure no woman desires to have a career.
52	A woman has to be at home in order to maintain children and household chores.
54	It is the law of the nature that mothers have to stay in home and do what they can for their children.
54	Fathers are not mothers, so they can never do what mothers can do for children. According to the law of the nature, women are inherent mothers and they have to act according to their natural instinct.
55	The main duty of men is providing for the family, when men provide properly, then women can do their duties like upbringing children properly as well.
55	I basically disagree with the idea of women working outside the home. Women have more important duties to do rather than working.
58	Women's work causes children to feel deficiencies and I think women should avoid this by not working.
58	The ideal form of role division is a division according to women and men's nature. Women should stay at home and maintain the children.
62	Being a woman is joyful, someone who grasps the pleasure of being a woman, can be both a good mother and a good wife. If we say that women should work, is against femininity of women.
62	Women are inherently dependent lovers, and this is because of the affection that god has created women with. Women should be lovers and their beloved should be their husbands and children.
63	Nowadays, our society does not deal properly with women and women have no security to work outside the home. Each woman who has a career, loses her abilities in dealing with children, since the society is impatient in dealing with women and consequently, women become impatient in dealing with children.
63	These days, in west, people do not believe that women must be with their children and look after them and this has led to deconstruction of the family and the household in the west.
65	When a woman follows her interests and works outside the home, then it leads to the inappropriate upbringing of children.
65	When a woman became a mother, if she works, she has betrayed her children and even herself.
67	Working outside the home is against the nature of women and also, doing household chores and upbringing children is against the nature of men.
67	People who believe women should work outside the home, are under the influence of foreigner's propaganda. The west wants to make us like itself, but you see the situation of women and families in the west, it is pathetic.
68	In all times and in all societies, women and men had separate roles and duties according to their nature. The duty of men is providing money and safety for families and the duty of women is doing house chores and bringing up

	children.
68	The inherent feeling of motherhood causes mothers to want to be with their children all the time and not to have a career outside the home, because men cannot cope with children and house chores.
70	I am coming from a religious family, in this type of family, earning money is the duty of men and women should do house chores.
70	Household chores are so varied and a woman should spend all of her time to be successful in these chores.
71	I -as a woman- never wants to have job if my husband can provide me financially.
71	I think it is clear that the duty of a woman is not earning money, men should finance and lead the family and women should maintain the household with nurturing children and doing household chores.
72	The perfection of a woman is accepting the roles that the nature has brought for her, and these roles are being a good mother for her children and being a good wife for her husband.
72	Taking care of children in the safe and warm atmosphere of a household is the duty that women have naturally.
73	Women are inherent mothers and basically, women have been created to be mothers.
73	A woman must accept duties related to her inherent role, working outside the home and earning money, is incompatible with her inherent role as a mother.
75	If a woman has a job outside the home, she spends her time in vain.
75	The major duty of a woman is being in love. A woman should love her life and her husband in order to be an ideal woman.
77	I -as a woman- love my life and because of this, I even do not think about working outside the home, It is duty of men to earn money for households, because men are stronger than women, both biologically and mentally.
77	Traditions work for the best, women working outside the home, is against our traditions.
78	If we say that women should work, it is against femininity.
78	The duty of women is to forming the life emotionally, not to work or earn money.
81	Something belong to the nature and do not lose their importance, being a mother is one of them. Women have to respect the nature by accepting duties of being a mother.
81	Women have to do household chores and men have to provide for the family, this is the nature.
82	When a woman works outside the home, it may causes the failure in children's upbringing, I think women should stay at home.
82	The feeling of motherhood has been given to women by god and women have to respect this feeling by not working outside the home just for some more money.
85	It is obvious that families with working mothers are so corrupted.
85	Like old days, I think it is the duty of women to do household chores properly and the duty of men is the financial support of the family.

89	I -as a woman- prefer not to work outside the home, my priority as a woman is to maintain my house to be a pleasant place for my husband and children.
89	The duty of a woman is not having a job and earning money, a woman needs to be supported by her man to be able to maintain house chores and the financial supports is the most important one.
90	I think working cannot be joyful for women, the best recreation that a woman can have is being with her children and husband in a warm environment that she provides in home
90	Women that believe they need to have jobs outside the home have forgotten their main duty in the life, which is providing a pleasant atmosphere in the home by their femininity.

Table: A-2

Second Category: Moments with accepting the logic of difference.

Num	Phrase
08	A woman must not work outside the home and should deal with house chores efficiently, but women should also have some extra activities like painting courses or etc. to be happy and succulent in the home.
08	When the husband and children are not at home, women can do their desired works like watching satellite TVs, doing sport courses, shopping and etc. in order to be succulent at home.
11	Nowadays, with existence of satellite TVs and technological equipment, women never get bored in homes, If they are bored, they can go to swimming pools or shopping centres and such places with their friends, though this must not cause failure in their duties in doing house chores.
11	Some women like me, do not like to have a job outside the home, but to have other activities outside the home is so important. For instance, women should go shopping and have some fun with their friends.
13	Based on life conditions and the income of the husband, a wife should have her own life style, for example, she can take language courses or go to gym.
13	Men should earn money, but women should have the authority to spend this money for the children and the household.
20	If women stay at home all the time, she would get exhausted and despondent, she should travel and take training courses and should have fun with her friends.
20	Women should keep the home in its ideal condition, but she also needs to be active outside the home, for instance, going to the movies and shopping with her friends.
25	It is true that women are inherent mothers, but this does not mean that women should stay in homes forever, women should go to gym and take computer classes, but they must not forget their children and husbands when they are with friends.
25	If a woman stay at home, she becomes depressed and exhausted, she needs to go out and entertain herself, but as much as she could maintain the home

	and the children.
28	Women should be active in the society in order to avoid any depression; they should be entertained, especially when children are grown up. For instance, they should go shopping and gather with their friends.
28	Some women like me, do not like to have a career outside the home, but having other activities outside the home is so important; for instance, women should go shopping and have some fun with friends.
33	Being a mother, I mean a good mother, is more important for women than anything else, but if a woman wants to be a good mother, then she needs to have some fun for herself, for example shopping or going to restaurants.
33	Maternal feeling is the most important feeling in the nature of every woman, but it depends on how we see it, I think a good mother should be a happy mother and a woman can be happy if she have activities such as taking exercise classes and artistic courses outside the home.
36	Women should be active outside the home, women should go to classes, restaurants and gather with their friends in order to be succulent in the home.
36	If a woman put all her energy in doing house chores and children upbringing, then she would become so exhausted and depressed. Besides these duties that a woman has, she needs to take music and exercise courses, and do shopping which is the most important one.
43	I think a woman should be active outside the home, but these activities like taking artistic and exercise courses should never affect the main duty of a woman which is maintaining homes and children.
43	The first priority of women is doing household chores and raising children, but besides these duties, she can have fun in her spare time.
50	Women need to be active outside the home, activities like artistic classes which is compatible with their nature.
50	I think it is better for women to be housekeepers but they should not be excluded from society, therefore, they need to go to pools or painting classes to be active in the society.
53	Today's women never become exhausted and bored at homes because of satellite TVs and TV series.
53	Women should take training courses and continue their education, but there is no need to have jobs and earn money.
76	I think there is no need for women to work outside the home, but they need to go to shopping centres and training classes like painting or music to be happy with maintaining the household.
76	Women should be active outside the home, but working and earning money is not kinds of activities that match with the nature of women.
79	A woman needs to be in the society, but being active does not necessarily mean to have a job, if a man provides, then his wife can do shopping and lots of other activities.
79	Being active in the society does not mean just working and earning money, women can be active in the society while they do not have a career, and they can go to gym or have artistic activities.
84	Maternal feeling in women is a gift from god, so women should respect this

	God-given gift; I say, women can have activities outside the home but their main priority should be child raising and this is their main job.
84	Today's women do not stay at homes, these shopping centres and training classes have helped women to be more active in the society and I think women should spend time on these activities as long as they can do household chores that are their main duty.

Table: A-3

Third Category: Floating signifier.

Num	Phrase
01	Women could work outside the home if they want, but this is not their duty.
01	Women can work for themselves in order to not be bored, but they also have to do house chores; That is why it is better for them to do some normal works, which is not time-consuming.
07	It is good for both man and woman to work outside the home, but woman should work much less than man; for instance, she could have a part-time job or work just one or two days per week. If a woman wants to have a job, it is fine, but she needs to know that basically she has to do house chores as well.
07	95 percent of financial needs of a family must be earned by men and 5 percent by women, if they consist on having a job; on the other hand, 95 percent of house chores are duties of women and men should do only 5 percent.
14	The main responsibility of women is maintaining home; if she wants to work, then she needs to have a part-time job to be able to do house chores as well.
14	Women should work both inside and outside the home, but outside the home women should do feminine works like solicitorship or working in retails or being a secretory in offices.
17	Women can work if they want, but they need to spend the money that they have earned for themselves, since financing the family is the duty of men.
17	A woman could have job outside the home, just when she manages her time to do both, so I believe it is better for women to have part-time jobs if they insist on working.
21	Women's careers have to be compatible with their maternal feelings; in the end, women are more sensitive than men.
21	If a woman wants to have a job outside the home, she needs to like the job a lot, for example working in kindergartens is an appropriate job for women.
22	Working is an option for women, but if the financial situation of the family is bad, then women should work to help men.
22	Most of the time, fathers cannot do what a mother can do for children, so if a woman wants to work, her priority should be her children.
27	The main duty of women is nurturing children, when their children grew up, they can work, but feminine jobs I prefer.
27	Considering todays financial situation, both men and women must work outside the home, but women should have part-time jobs to be able to handle

	house chores.
35	A family should never be in need of wife's money. Women can work if they want, but the priority is the family.
35	It is men's duty to earn money for the family and women's duty is raising children and doing household chores, but women could help men if the financial situation was bad.
41	Men should not demand women's money, but if a woman wants to work, it is good to earn some money to spend on her favourites.
41	The maternal feeling in the nature of each woman causes the emergence of duties, a woman can work, but after she raised her children properly. Women should not work in any places, if a woman wants to work, she needs to do feminine jobs like hairdressing.
47	Women could have feminine jobs outside the home if they want, but they should spend the money that they have earned for themselves, since financing the family is man's duty.
47	Women cannot tolerate work conditions, unless they have a feminine job compatible with their nature.
56	Both husband and wife should help each other in a bad situation, but we should not forget that the main duty of men is financial providing and women's is nurturing children.
56	One must understand what she wants, if she wants to work, it is very good, but she should never marry. When she is married and has children, then she has duties to do in the home and no one can help her in doing duties such as children upbringing.
57	Perhaps women who work outside the home and have jobs compatible with their emotions, are more successful in nurturing children, because they have been in the society. Even if my spouse could finance the family properly, I would still like to have a job.
57	Men should finance 80 percent of the family's income and women could help in the other 20 percent, in doing household chores the same token can be applied but vice versa.
59	If women want to work, they should do feminine works in feminine environments, because not all working environments are secure for women.
59	A woman could work, when she does not have a child, but after having a baby, she needs to look after the baby.
61	I -as a woman- prefer to have a job, if the financial situation of the family is bad, but in general, I prefer to take care of children and be a housekeeper.
61	A mother should be with her children and if she wants to work, she should have a part-time job in order to maintain children and home as well, the ideal is for women is to work 2 or 3 days a week in order not to get depressed on one hand and on the other hand, be able to maintain household.
64	Women should never have full-time jobs, because they need to be at home with children and do household chores.
64	Men should provide at least 70 percent of household livelihood and if women want to work, she could provide the other 30 percent, but in household chores, men can only do 10 percent of the job and 90 percent is women's duty.

66	When a woman turned into a mother, she should not work at least for three years, after that if she favours, she can have a part-time job.
66	Proper jobs for women are part-time jobs in retails or offices, since they need to do household chores as well.
74	Working is beneficial for women, but they need to do at least 70 percent of household chores, then it is better for them to have part-time jobs.
74	Women can work just in case of financial needs, unless, I think they have more important duties to do like warming up the family environment.
80	If I did not have to work, then I would never work and spend more time with my children. Working is an option for women, if they want to work, they have to do some feminine jobs like being a secretary.
80	Earning money is not duty of women, but they can work if they want not to be depressed and exhausted.
83	Working is good for women, but after they raised children. The main duty of a woman is nurturing children and after that, she can work if she wants.
83	Nowadays, in our society, lots of women are working and I think this is good as long as they also do their duties at home, like cooking, cleaning and etc.
86	Housekeeping is the main duty of every woman, if she maintains this duty very well, then it is fine to work in her spare time.
86	The best option for women is to find a career while she can be at home, like translating. This would help them to maintain home and also earn money.
87	Feminine jobs like hairdressing or tailoring are careers that a woman can have, not all jobs are compatible with women's emotions.
87	Women can work if they want, no one should force them to work, it is very important for a woman to do what she truly loves, because women are inherent lovers, they love their children, their husband and also they need to love their job.
88	I believe workingwomen are better mothers, because they are more aware about society and its problems, but women should work as long as they can spend enough time with their children in order to take care of them very well.
88	The best job for women is working in kindergartens, because they can bring their children there and be around them.

Table: A-4

Fourth Category: Alternative preferred meaning.

Num	Phrase
18	Everything should be divided equally between men and women, household chores and earning money.
18	Women have to work and be active outside the home in the society.
26	Women must work outside the home in order to have financial independence; not working outside the home would exclude women from the society.
26	A couple should not have children at all, children cause women to turn into housewives, a couple should agree on not having children.
31	Women have to work in order to feel beneficial for the society, otherwise

	they sacrifice themselves for the children and the husband, and they would have nothing for themselves at the end of the day.
31	Women must work outside the home and house chores must be divided equally between wife and husband. I think, men and women are equal and I see no reason that justify women have to do all the house chores.
32	Both wife and husband are responsible for the household chores equally.
32	Women must work, it is part of women's rights to be able to work outside the home like men and have financial independence in order not to be under men's shadow.
48	It is not fair that women must stay at home and do just household chores, they should have a job outside the home and household chores should be divided equally. There is no difference between women and men in working, both of them should work to have a better financial situation and both of them must work equally in the home, I believe.
48	It is totally nonsense if we believe that women should stay at home and be housekeepers, women need to be in the society and the best form of being part of the society is having a career.
60	Women are demanding equal rights with men and if we say women should stay at home and do not work, then we disrespect this equality.
60	I think a couple should be equal in all aspects of life, I mean, in earning money and doing household chores and also nurturing children.
69	I identify myself as a feminist; therefore, I believe in equality in rights between women and men. A couple needs to divide duties of life equally.
69	A good mother is not a mother that sacrifices herself for children, but a woman is a good mother, when she teaches her children about equality of women and men in all aspects of life.

Section B

Interviewees' statements, which formed obtained categories in data analysing in regard to signifier of the "60s" in "Condition White" TV series.

Table B-1-1

First Category: Moments/fixed meanings: First sub-category: Richness of meaning in the 60s.

Num	Phrase
02	The spiritual and cultural atmosphere of the society was better back then. The current demand of our society is to return to those circumstances of the 60s.
04	Those who have experienced those times are different from others.
07	Humanity and spirituality were much higher among people back then. I have nostalgia for that time.
11	False cultures have entered freely. At that time, everyone was the same. Now, they all want to keep up to the Joneses.
12	The 60s life style was much better, there were impurities, but it was much better than the present in general.
13	Everything got ruined after the 60s, because tenderness has lessened.
17	Family was the most important thing back then, but now people do not care about their relatives.
23	There is no mercy in people anymore. No one has mercy on others. The government and economy does not really matter, people have changed.
25	If someone had a problem, everybody would help him. Now, everyone thinks of his own business.
29	Feeling absurd and empty, which is common nowadays, did not exist back then, since every person's place was defined.
31	The most important thing we had and lost, is honesty, no one would lie to others. There were important matters, which are dead now, such as humanity and honesty.
32	Stuff like family and honesty had a meaning back then. The society has lost discipline. In the 60s, it had discipline and stability.
34	Youth do not respect elderly anymore; these things had meanings in the 60s for all. Manhood and bravery used to be the most important characteristics.
35	We would not even look at the girls of our neighbourhood, But today a boy has a girlfriend and even so, he uses sexual slurs towards other girls.
36	Personal advantages used to be of less importance, now brothers have no mercy on each other. The intimacy we had, does not exist anymore.
38	Individuals are important now; it used to be communities. Nowadays, everyone is selfish, it was not like this before.
39	All people became carefree and extravagant. It has nothing to do with the government; the culture has changed.
40	Nowadays, no one gives a damn about the humanistic values, which were important at that time.

45	People's characters used to be positive, now everybody has turned into fools with no positive character.
48	The most important thing we have lost is peace. Despite all deficiencies, we had peace. Time has passed and that is made us to forget how our society was better at that time.
51	Back then neighbours were brothers, now everybody turned into wolves.
52	Despite the 60s, personal advantage is what matters to all now. Men used to be gentlemen, now they do not know how to be a real man.
53	Just look at the films or loves of that time, they used to be the same. It is not the same anymore.
59	Friendships we had, you can never ever find in any time and place. It is the rule of time to pass the good days.
61	What we used to have is morality. Values of that time are lost and people made it so. Values of that time were beyond humans; we used to have an ideal and perfect society.
62	The 60s had many flaws, but there was one advantage, which is lost now: people were not selfish.
65	I have nostalgia for the 60s, since we had spirituality back then and I myself am a spiritual person.
67	The culture has changed and it is mainly because spirituality is lost, people do not love each other anymore, but they see others as enemies.
69	I do not remember much of that time, but of what I heard, I think we had a beautiful society.
71	Our nation was in love; it is not the same anymore, not in love with someone or something but in love with himself or herself.
73	Immorality has increased in the society, if we had morality the way we had in the 60s, the situation would be much better.
74	People of that time, especially the veterans were all about bravery and sacrifice. It is not like this anymore.
75	People used to be at each other's side. Nowadays, if someone has a stroke in the street, no one would take him to the hospital. People had forgiveness back then.
77	People's relationships were not based on taking and giving back then, people used to care about others for the sake of god. Pain and suffering used to be less, as people would be at each other's' sides.
79	These days, no one is looking for spirituality. Back then it was people's main priority. All our values in the 60s are lost, both humanistic and social values.
82	Forgiveness and mercy used to be valued. People would care about your heart not appearances.
84	Hypocrisy did not exist back then, all were honest. I do not know why, but kindness was way more than today among people.
88	Lying was less; therefore, people would trust others easily. Today, everybody tries to deceive others.
89	Loves and friendships were more real in the 60s, people used to believe in morality, Jealousy did not exist and people were all alike. These days, they are all jealous of others' life.

Table: B-1-2

First Category: Moments/fixed meanings: Second sub-category: Social cohesion in the 60s.

Num	Phrase
01	I have nostalgia for the 60s, since back then, in the time of war, everyone was appealing for one thing and that was victory in the war.
03	Those days, everyone was united and was appealing for one aim. In the 60s, social solidarity was higher. I really miss those days.
05	I have nostalgia for that time. There were fewer difficulties and people would get along better. They would support others.
08	Yeah, I have nostalgia for that time, as there are compulsions now, which did not exist back then. Though, the situation might be better now, but people were all together in those days.
09	People would not snitch on others. They would support others. People related better to others back then.
14	Nowadays, everybody looks for his or her own benefit. Those days, the benefit of majority was important.
15	Though, there were war and difficulty, but people were more comfortable with others. Family members had a close relation back then. They were getting along well.
18	We used to gather with our family and friends a lot, now it has all been gone.
20	Back then, people's feelings and perceptions were closer to each other.
21	If there was a shortage, it was for everyone, all the same. Now, some have everything and some suffer.
22	At that time, everybody was like-minded. Now, dissension has increased.
24	Back then, people's culture was the same. It was easy to be prosperous. Everybody was like-minded back then, but now there is a distance among people.
28	The matters that have ruined our society now, they did not exist in the past. People were alike and homogenous.
27	Back then we were a community. Benefit of the society used to be the most important thing.
30	Friends and families used to spend more time together, but today they neglect each other. Therefore, I have nostalgia for the 60s, much better times indeed.
33	People used to be happy about visiting and gathering, but now they run away from each other.
37	There was such intimacy among people that no one would be unaware of how is going to friends and acquaintances.
41	Look at the children born in the 70s. They have nothing; at least, we have good memories.
42	Our people are attracted to lowbrow culture, they act based on their personal advantages. At that time they cared about others.
43	Our people are so attracted to lowbrow culture that all they can think is themselves. Despite the progress we had, no one cares about others, when

	they see them in trouble.
46	People were more intimate back then, they were aware of each other's situation. Somehow, solidarity was higher among people back then.
47	People are busier today, there used to be enough time to serve family and friends.
49	Obviously, I have nostalgia for the time and that is because of economic and cultural situation we have now. Back then, economic problems were much less and people's culture was homogenous.
54	People are nowadays selfish, that is what did not exist in the 60s.
55	I have a very good feeling towards the 60s, since there were no class in the society and everyone was kind to others.
56	Now, people do not see many things and do not care about others, but they did not used to prefer themselves to others.
58	There used to be common advantages, but the benefit today is to harm others.
60	The society was consistent back then, everyone would understand others. These days' differences are too much that no one even can notice others.
63	Back then, everyone wanted the benefit of the society rather than their personal advantage.
66	People used to be brothers and sisters; today, real brothers have no mercy on each other. Pain and suffering used to be less, as people would be at each other's sides.
68	People's relationships used to be more beautiful; people had a better understanding of their situation. I have nostalgia, as people used to stick together. Now, they are tearing apart.
70	I do not remember much about that time, but I believe the situation was better. At least people were kinder. People used to have common feelings, we have lost this unity.
78	People used to care about others and put their efforts to help others. Now, they would steal from others.
80	Neighbours used to be like family back then; and now, family members are like strangers. Our society was consistent and homogenous. What about now?
83	I do not remember much about that time, but I know that it was a war and people were united and coherent. Communications were honest and intimate, not like today full of flattery and hypocrisy.
85	It is true that the situation was not good, there was a war, the economic situation was bad, but people were friends and brothers and overcame hardships.
86	The 60s was the climax of our nation's idealism. All had a common ideal. These days they all think about their own interests.
90	The way people used to be is gone now. They used to care about others. Solidarity among people and their beliefs is gone now.

Table: B-1-3

First Category: Moments/fixed meanings: Third sub-category: Absence of technology during the 60s.

Num	Phrase
08	Technology has torn people apart and has made these days different.
09	We had social solidarity back then, Technology and Internet have ruined everything,
14	Technology and Internet caused people to tear apart.
15	The situation was much better, when there was not Internet and such technologies.
17	There was love among people back then, technology has ruined it.
21	These mobile phones have spoiled the bond people used to have.
23	Technology and luxury has spoiled people's beliefs. Their beliefs used to be beautiful.
24	Technology has torn people apart. When this stuff did not exist, people were intimate.
30	People's thoughts were close back then, technology has ruined everything.
33	All the good things are screwed now and that is all because of satellite TV channels.
39	Satellite TV channels and Internet has screwed everything up.
43	Technology has changed everything and ruined the beautiful human relations. It was all more beautiful, when there was no technology.
45	We are like machines now, like robots, feelings are lost among people.
48	Satellite TV channels and Internet have changed our culture; people were not ready for such technology.
55	Technology is an issue now. Everyone cares about worthless stuff.
56	People used to socialise more and be kind to everyone in the streets. Now everyone is busy with their mobile phones.
58	People used to be at others' side, now they are apart, as culture has changed because of internet and satellite TV channels.
63	People used to support each other, now there is a distance among them. As long as these technologies did not exist, they would socialise with others even with people in the streets.
65	The progress of technology has made people to tear apart and do not care about others. Back then, as much as you cared about yourself, at least half that amount you would care about others.
68	Everything was more beautiful back then and technology took away this beauty.
71	Since we had not such technology and luxury back then, there were no jealousy among people and they used to be kind to others.
74	Technology was not widespread and entertaining back then; it is tearing people apart now.

77	All the ladies are watching satellite TV channels or using internet now, which is why they do not care about each other.
82	Satellites, internet and these technologies have made people apart.
85	TV programs of the time were great; they all had a message to give to the audience. Nowadays, what Internet and satellite TV programs try to teach is to care only about you.
86	People used to have faith and belief. There was no satellite to take away people's faith.
90	These technologies like new mobile phones and tablets and especially internet, have caused the emergence of a new life style. People spend no time together and even in family parties everyone just look at their technological things.

Table: B-1-4

First Category: Moments/fixed meanings: Fourth sub-category: Economic welfare during the 60s.

Num	Phrase
01	Economic situation made everything different. During the 60s, there were no such gap in the society, because the economic situation was more stable than todays.
29	Back then, you were sure about your financial situation, I mean, you knew that at least you would have something to eat with your family and you would not be hungry.
38	Bad economy and the fact that everyone wants to keep up to the joneses are the reasons we had distanced the good old days.
47	To find a job is a problem now, everybody had a job in the 60s.
52	Economic problems have reached a level that all principles and friendships have faded.
53	Economic and cultural situation make people to believe that the 60s were a better time. We have nothing of our own, while we used to have friendship and principles.
75	When income is low and poverty is widespread, conflict would emerge. We used to have a good life with our income, whatever it was.
02	Nostalgia we have, since everything was much better, we had welfare.
03	Everyone has turned to be a wolf now, they want to rob you and make money. Back then, people cared about others.
04	It was like this back then: everyone making any income would help those in need.
05	Pennilessness is now the reason of all devastation. There were difficulties before, but all people were the same and no one had to keep up with others,
07	When greed emerges, things go bad. Those days no one had greed.
11	There were no luxury back then, therefore, expenses were less.

12	Now, people just follow others to see what they buy, It was not like this at that time.
13	Relationships were based on love those days, but today, it is based on money.
18	I have nostalgic feelings towards those days, because I think that everything was better then. Money was not all people think of.
20	I really like to return to those days, everything was better and money did not matter the way it does now.
22	Now, people just want to keep up to the joneses. Back then, everyone was satisfied with what they had.
25	At that time, people would not think of gathering a fortune. Now, everyone just think about money.
27	Greed was less back then.
28	Our financial situation might have been worse, but no one was greedy. Now, everyone is greedy for more money.
31	Capitalist way of thinking is common now; everybody reaches for his own advantage.
32	There is class gap today. Everybody tries to deceive others.
34	The culture has changed. Everybody is going after money, cars, villas and etc. Back then, everybody was looking for spirituality.
35	Now people do not know what to work for. That is why everybody is a money-worshiper. They used to care about others.
36	People used to be intimate, if someone had a piece of bread; he would share it with others. Now, people look to see what they can take from others.
37	No one would steal from you, I mean, you could not point at someone and tell: he is gathering a fortune by robbing people. But now, everybody wants to rob you.
40	Nowadays; one hundred percent of those who have a fortune, have robbed people. Who would rob people like this in the 60s?
41	Life was easier back then indeed, the costs were less, you did not have to work your arse off to make a living.
42	Back then, friendship and devotion were all people wanted; now they all look for money.
46	Something that did not exist in the 60s was calculation to reach your own advantage.
49	Nowadays everyone is greedy for money. At that time if you had something, you did not need to hide it from others, since there was no greed.
51	Luxury and show off did not exist in the 60s, but now people show off about what they do not even have.
54	People used to be pure, now everyone is thinking about financial issues.
59	Now the culture has changed; people value things, which did not used to be valuable, people -these days- only care about money.
60	Money has become influential in a way that stealing is not immoral anymore. One, who steals more, is wealthier and gets others to respect him. While, it was humanity which used to be influential.
61	I would love to live in the 60s. These days, everything is measured with money.

	If you are rich, you have value.
62	There were not any economic problems back then. People would rather to be with their family and friends.
66	Economic problems and the need to keep up with the joneses have made people to lose their kindness and communicate less.
67	People were artists at that time; they knew the art of living. These days, everybody is following money.
69	All men would go to war back then; they did not care about financial issues. They only cared about their homeland. These days, they only care about themselves.
70	The 60s was a time when people support others and work for others. Now, they all have a financial point of view.
73	Human, when hungry, is worse than an animal. I do not believe that our people are hungry, but greed has blinded them and made them to be obsessed with needs, which were not significant back then.
78	In the 60s, it was hideous to eat out. These days, it is luxurious.
79	People used to live more comfortable, since they were not envious of other's life.
80	People would give up their lives for the sake of others. These days, they do not even give up their money.
83	Expectations used to be lower, you would be happy with a minimum income. Now, nothing can fulfil people.
84	Life standards were based on morality. These days, they are based on financial measures.
88	Our lives were blessed; I would work and feed a family. Now, I work ten times harder and it is not yet enough.
89	People yet were not wolves who want steal other's fortune.

Table: B-2

Second Category: Alternative preferred meanings.

Num	Phrase
06	People of the 60s are the burnt generation. Everything has been experienced in this decade, but after the war, things got better.
06	I do not understand why people stick to this nostalgia. New things are always better.
10	In my opinion, there is not any difference between the 60s and other decades. Anyway, any time has its own characteristics.
10	All I remember of the time is the hardship of war, the air raid sirens and fear. It was nothing beautiful.
16	The 60s feels like sadness and deficiency for me, I am glad we have passed it.
16	I have no special feeling towards the 60s.
19	It has not changed that much, the situation used to bad and it is still the same.
19	It is a cliché to say that people have changed during the time. Everyone -using his mind- can be a better person in order to live better.

26	If we say that people used to be better, we are affected by the state's propaganda, which wants to cover its problems.
26	All I can remember is misery and misfortune. If you wanted to criticise, they would shut you up, because there was a war and revolutionary forces would make life a hell for you.
44	I will not forget the bitter memories of that time, though our people passed it with unity.
44	All bitterness and misery it was. All would lie to each other and no one would dare to tell how he truly thinks.
50	Our people get carried away easily; the time was all about war, martyrdom and devotion. People would get carried away with this stuff.
50	People who have experienced living in the 60s have forgotten the breathtaking circumstances in that decade; everything was about war and defeat.
57	Not only I have no nostalgia about that decade, but also I even do not want to remember that decade because of difficulties that we had.
57	The time has passed and the 60s has gone and I see no reason to remember that time.
64	I do not even want to speak about that era. The 60s was the era of blood.
64	The decade was the era of fear and horror, we experienced war at that era and the domestic policy was about eliminating political parties and social groups. Why should I have nostalgia about that dark decade?
57	The 60s is all about war and propaganda of Islamic Republic about that war which could end 4 years earlier. Wartime caused that this Islamic Republic state became more powerful with taking youth's life.
57	I do not remember that decade very well and I do not want to hear about the 60s. Every problem and defeat that we face today is the product of that decade.
72	I have no nostalgia about the 60s and I do not understand why remembering that era is so important.
72	We passed an era and I think it would be better for our society to look forward, not remembering what has passed and never come back.
76	I do not remember that decade; therefore, I have no nostalgia about the 60s.
76	What I know about the 60s is war between Iran and Iraq, and I think having nostalgia about wartime is kind of psychological illness.
87	I have been born in that decade and I do not remember that decade very well, but I think passing the war era is good and personally I am so glad that we passed the 60s.

Section C

Interviewees' statements, which formed obtained categories in data analysing in regard to signifiers of "Sovereignty", "Insight" and "Velayat Madari" in "Mukhtar Nameh" TV series.

Table: C-1

First Category: Ideal subjects' positions.

Num	Phrase
04	I believe in supreme leadership and I also believe the current supreme leader could prove the Shia is right and fair.
04	Our people, I mean, most of them want the Islamic Republic, in the same way people of Syria want Bashar Al-Assad.
12	I believe in supreme leadership, because at the end of the day, country needs a leader.
12	Capitalists are the only group who are opposing the Islamic Republic; others support the regime.
15	The country should be reformed, but through the means of supreme leadership.
15	I do not have an ideological approach, if there is an Islamic Republic and it works, then it is fine. The regime is great, if they do not pick on people and give them freedom.
23	We are the most secure country in the region. It must be because of a good government and supreme leader, isn't it?
23	Everyone, everywhere, has his own problems, we have to trust the government in order to make the situation better.
24	We need a leader. If we did not have the supreme leader, our situation would be unsecure, as other countries in the region.
24	I am against anything that questions our security, whether it is an objection or an uprising or anything else.
30	The supreme leader is good. His subordinates are hurting us. He, himself, is fine.
30	I love this country; I do not have any problem with the supreme leadership and I think this government is doing well in keeping the country in peace and safety.
37	You have to pay the price, if you want to substitute this regime. In this case, the current regime works for me and I am satisfied with the supreme leadership.
37	We should maintain the supreme leader; we need a leader, unless the situation gets worse.
39	I care about politics. I dissent the events of 2009, because we were about to lose our political independence.
39	I agree with the concept of "insight". Aqa (the supreme leader), himself has mentioned that anyone who has not acquired "insight" is helping the enemy.

45	The supreme leader as a superior person has saved the country many times. Everyone should trust the captain and the head of the ship.
45	We live from hand to mouth, everyone is unsure about the future. Anyway, we have security and that is because of this regime and the supreme leader. There are difficulties for sure, but they would be resolved.
49	I do not have any problem with the supreme leader or the Islamic state, because I know any alternative would have its own damages and losses.
49	Supreme leadership is not a problem, every state should work for the good of its people and we have security.
55	I believe we have cultural, economic and political problems in this country, which has a good leader. We should support the supreme leader and we should also have qualified people to manage.
55	Most people in our society are religious that is why you cannot imagine a republic, which is not Islamic.
58	No one likes chaos here, as there is in Iraq, Egypt or Syria. At least, with this supreme leader, we have security.
58	The only way to change is an armed revolt, but it will cause casualties as it happened in Iraq and Syria against ISIS. We do not want Iran to be like this and pay such price
63	Every society, in any time, needs a leader to help people reach what they want; considering current situation in Iran and in the region, I think the supreme leader did well in maintaining the country.
63	We have security in the Islamic Republic, which is the most important factor. So, political issues and such stuff are nonsense. We owe security in this country to the supreme leader.
65	I basically agree with the concept of supreme leadership, but the supreme leader must be someone who supports all people.
65	Theocratic regime and supreme leadership are fine concepts, if only they work right, and I think the current supreme leader is doing well in serving country and keeping it in peace and security.
67	Most of our people are Muslims and to be honest, they do not have capacity for a non-Islamic state; that is why this supreme leader is very fine.
67	The supreme leader or any other kind of leader needs to bring welfare to people. Anyway, at least this supreme leader has brought us security.
70	I support the supreme leader one hundred percent, since society needs a leader. Our society is Islamic, the leader must be a Muslim.
70	Theocratic regime is the best, because religion is a determining frame of life and when you do not have religion, it leads to chaos. A leader above all people also prevents chaos.
82	We have security in the country, the security that no other country in the region has. It indicates that Islamic Republic's policies and actions by the supreme leader are right.
82	I have been to other countries; I am familiar with their situation. Our country has the most desirable environment.
90	If we did not have the supreme leader, we would have the same situation as Iraq and Syria.

90	Foreign countries have always wanted to control our country, but the supreme leader and Islamic Republic have always stopped them.
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Table: C-2-1

Second Category: Floating signifiers: The economy is important.

Num	Phrase
01	I have no comment on supreme leadership; economic situation has affected the culture and spirituality in this country. If economy works, we would not have political problems.
01	I would not struggle for reform in Iran; the situation is not that bad and there are only economic concerns.
02	I have no comment on supreme leadership, if economy improves, even this government would work. People's financial situation is catastrophic; wealth inequality among people has increased.
02	If economic problems get solved, the situation gets better and people would reach peace.
11	The main problem of all people is economic issues; talking about the supreme leader is useless, no one is in the mood to oppose any other issue and pay any price for any objection.
11	The main problem today is economy, financial situation of ordinary people is bad, and that is why they do not care about politics.
20	I am not into politics, economy is the main priority, if it improves; everything gets better.
20	We do not have political problems; it is about economy. Iranian Rial's value has dropped and we cannot travel abroad anymore. I have no opinion about supreme leadership, but I know people should be satisfied and if economy improves, they would be.
27	The supreme leader or anyone else, it has no difference as long as they work to make economic situation better. Our main problem is economy. It is not related to the supreme leadership. The westerners made us miserable by the sanctions.
27	The first demand of men is money, we have economic issues and this should get fixed. We need respect. The economic situation has made us miserable and degraded.
29	I am not into politics and I have nothing to do with supreme leadership, only if financial situation gets better.
29	Everybody has financial problems; we cannot travel abroad anymore to buy cloths and such stuff. The main problem is economy, who is in the mood for political protests?
32	The issue is not the supreme leader, freedom and such. The main issue is economy. Some make easy money and they have a monopoly on economy.
32	Wealthy people are getting wealthier and poor get poorer. I am not into politics; my financial situation is awful.

34	I do not think about the supreme leader and alike. If you had money, you would have everything. The regime should be economically reformed. If economy improves, culture would get fixed then.
34	When economy gets fixed and inflation gets to be controlled, then you can think of other issues.
35	I am not into politics and I do not even think about the theocratic state. Objective condition of life matters to me, and it is the fact that economic condition is down.
35	The whole world demands freedom, happiness, laughter, amusement parks, traveling and so on. Any regime that can provide these demands is fine with me.
38	I am not into politics and I would not pay any price for any change. If only economic situation get better, we would reach peace.
38	If you acquire money, politics and culture would get fixed. When financial issues get solved, political and cultural problems would drop. I have nothing to do with politics; our problem is economy.
40	I do not have any problem with supreme leadership; our issue is not politics but economy. We need an economic reform.
40	When you have freedom, but you do not have a job, it is unimportant. I am not into politics; I only want my job status to improve.
41	Everything is wrong nowadays, it has nothing to do with the supreme leadership or such stuff; the main issue is economy. Economy is determinant. How can we affect politics?
41	Politics is not important; it is not our concern. People are concerned about economic situation.
46	I do not have any problem with the theocratic state and the supreme leader. If they do their job and fix the economic issues, no one would have any problem with them.
46	I believe we have issues to fix, such as economic issues. But it is our problems and they have nothing to do with foreigners.
47	I do not have any political issue with the supreme leader, If he can maintain people's livelihoods. But the problem is that if he is gone, our situation gets worse.
47	The main issue is economy, because in cultural aspect, our people do not have capacity for freedom.
53	People have economic problems. In this case, it is no one's business to know if the supreme leader is good or bad. People should work hard, though they do not.
53	The theocratic regime should remain, but our people need economic welfare and it is the most important demand.
54	Everybody is in search of money and easy ways to earn it, which is why politics is only a concern for people who live abroad. I do not have a problem with the supreme leader, if only he can fix economic problems.

54	In order to be wealthy in this country, you have to be close to the sources of power. I used to live morally, I had not accepted a bribe, and then, I realised I have lost my opportunities. Now I accept it and I am like others.
62	There are priorities. Our problem is not supreme leadership now, it is economic policies, which has made people miserable and has created inflation.
62	Our economy is sick. Informal dealers are close to the Revolutionary Guards and top officials, they get wealthier and ordinary people get poorer. If you oppose, they would shut you up.
73	Politics is not an issue right now, but our economy needs to be fixed. Comparing to other countries in the region, our political situation is very good. Our problem is economy; political concerns are useless.
73	Economic problems made people to believe that our problem is caused by an Islamic state, but if this very state works based on true Islam, every problem should be solved.
75	Politics is not the main factor, but economy is. We should work harder and corruption should be controlled.
75	People's problem is economy. No one follows political and cultural issues as long as we have economic problems.
79	If Islamic Republic and supreme leader find a way to resolve these economic problems, we do not have any problem with the Islamic Republic.
79	The issue is not politics; I have nothing to do with politics. My main concern is economy, I want to travel abroad once a year and I need something to be done in order to do so.
83	I am not into politics and I do not comment on political issues. I believe that if our economy improves. Our country improves as well.
83	I work a lot and I need to have a comfortable life. I am not a man of politics; I do not care about it. All people including me, have financial problems, it has nothing to do with politics.

Table C-2-2

Second Category: Floating signifiers: People's culture is bad.

Num	Phrase
03	These days, all people are hypocritical and deceptive. They change their mind, depending on where they stand. The problem of our country is not theocracy and supreme leader. People make up the problems.
03	Our nation has problems, even if this theocratic regime change – which is unlikely-, people would not change.
07	Our people are all about pleasure and idleness, it has nothing to do with the regime and theocracy, they lack humanistic values. We used to see positive characteristics everywhere. People have become fool, a bunch of indifferent fools!
07	History has taught us that our people are not honourable. They are all for self. They have no honour.
13	Everybody is nagging about his or her status, but no one is going to do

	something. They are all chasing money. Our people are opportunists; no one really cares about reforming the situation.
13	We face many problems in culture, industry, economy and welfare. Some of these issues are related to the state, but most of them are people's faults.
22	If society changes and people do the right things, political issues would get fixed. The problem is not the supreme leader, but people.
22	No group effort has ever worked in this country. Everyone should try to reform oneself individually; team work has nothing but damage.
36	Our current issue is not politics and the supreme leader, because we have many thieves who are connected to power and they rob people.
36	Money is the axis of everything; some had connections to the sources of power and became rich. They had the ability. Those who do not have the ability nag about the situation. In this country, if you neglect the principles, you would get rich.
42	This country needs a reform, no one knows how? Our people have turned into fools who worship money.
42	Our culture has a problem, people are immoral and it has ruined everything. While, in an Islamic Republic, Islamic principles should be observed.
52	We do not have political problems, I mean, we have but they are not important comparing to the fact that our people's culture is a mess. In a culture that rich people are thieves, do you believe political protest works?
52	When everyone worships money and when all wealthy people are thieves, you should obviously shut politics down. Our politics is ruined, the same as our culture, but we can do nothing!
89	Our problem is that people have lost faith in god; they have turned into liars and thieves. The supreme leader is good and he is dealing very well with problems that have occurred in the region.
89	Our main problem is that people have lost Islamic culture and become corrupted.

Table: C-3

Third Category: Rejecting the position of "others".

Num	Phrase
05	I am not into politics; I just follow the news. I prefer to withdraw the issue, since there is nothing I can do about it.
05	I have no opinion about supreme leadership. I do not want to be into politics. I am not ready to pay its price.
06	I am not into politics and I have no political comment, I only know that everything is wrong here.
06	I do not even think about this stuff. If politicians could do something, that is great. It has nothing to do with me to pay any price for.
08	I have nothing to do with politics, what is the use of distressing me? People would be more satisfied, if these political struggles were less.
08	I have nothing to do with supreme leadership. Why would I think about it?

09	I am not into politics at all. In 2009, I joined the protests till June the 15 th ; then I got scared and quit.
09	We have lots of political satellite TV channels. If something could be done, they would do it. If they cannot, why would we make the situation worse?
14	I am not into politics, because I am not ready to pay its price. There is no use in objecting this regime or supreme leadership. You only have to pay the price for your opposition.
14	Politics has no meaning in this country, since as you speak about politics, you would go to prison.
17	I am not into politics. I used to attend official rallies of Islamic Republic when I was a teenager, then I realised that they are taking advantage of us. Politics is not our job to do; it is biting more than we can chew.
17	I am not into politics and I do not answer such questions. I cannot comment on supreme leadership.
18	I do not have any problem with the supreme leader, but I believe men of god should handle religion and let politicians do politics.
18	We need reform, but I am not ready to pay any price, because we have built our lives by now.
21	I am not into politics and have no comment about the issue.
21	I essentially dissent a theocratic state. But I would not pay any price to put it down; because we have some kind of peace now.
25	I am not into politics, I follow the news but I am not ready to pay any price. Anyone, based on his capability should do as he can to reform the country. I have no capability.
25	If the Islamic state reforms, that is wonderful. If it did not, we wait for it to collapse, because a revolt has no function.
28	I am not into politics. I did not go out to protest in 2009. I mean, I was afraid to get arrested.
28	The regime should be reformed, everything should be reformed, but it is not our job. Politicians should do that.
31	I am not into politics and have no opinion about these issues.
31	Politics is ugly; I have nothing to do with it. I do not care about the supreme leader and such, because I am not ready to pay the price. Change in politics; do not change your life.
33	I am not into politics and have nothing to do with it. Everyone who cares about politics should be ready to pay the price.
33	The state is so powerful that they do not let people say any word in objection.
43	I am not into politics; these struggles make me sick.
43	Politics is for politicians; I have another job. We should find a practical way to practice politics, because in this country political activism is impossible, it is better to stay silent.
48	I am not involved in politics; I believe the problem is inside people's hearts, if we all change our hearts, the situation gets better.
48	To pay any price for any political activity is the most useless work in the world. Men should not ruin their lives for nothing.

50	I am not into politics, in my opinion people do not want to get involved in politics, because it has a price to pay.
50	Politics is ugly and nasty. I have nothing to do with the supreme leader. Anyone he is, I do not care.
56	I am not interested in politics and have no comment. Politics is ugly. I have nothing to do with it and I believe it is insignificant.
56	For instance, protests in 2009 were useless. Its only function was for people to understand how ugly politics is.
59	I am not into politics; I do not even follow the news. I try not to involve in political debates, because I have no interest and I do not like to pay its price.
59	When one you are confronting is strong and your political thoughts may cause you to pay a price, why would you do that?
60	I have no opinion about political issues.
60	Politics and political activity is useless even when you have strong objections to the situation, because you have to risk many things.
61	I am not into politics, but I believe all issues are coming from forcing Islam on people. People should be free to be Muslims or not to be Muslims.
61	If I knew that objection and political activity has no price to pay, I would do that, but I know it causes damage; therefore, I prefer to be silent.
66	I am not into politics and I do not go along with the crowd.
66	I have no idea about supreme leadership; it is dangerous to comment on such issues.
68	I am not into politics and have no opinion. Politics is dangerous. I follow the news and I feel sorry, because nothing can be done.
68	Political activity and objection is useless, I am not ready to pay its price.
69	I am not into politics at all and have no opinion.
69	I have nothing to do with supreme leadership, I believe in morality. The only approach, which can help us, is morality, not politics and protests.
71	I am not into politics, but I follow the news and I believe our problems are beyond political struggles.
71	If I were against the current political situation and the supreme leader, I would say nothing because I do not want to pay any price or get hurt over these issues.
72	I hate politics and have nothing to do with it.
72	The situation is in a way that if you have any objection you would not speak out because of fear.
74	I am not into politics and do not think about this stuff, I want to earn a minimum income to live.
74	This very supreme leader is a pure dictator, but who dare to say it? They will catch you and send you to <i>Kahrizak</i> (The notorious jail in 2009).
76	I am not into politics, but it is not possible for all to be indifferent; someone -I mean politicians- should do something.
76	There is not any appropriate idea worth fighting, which is why I have nothing to do with politics.

77	Nowadays, politics plays a vital role in people's lives and everybody knows how important politics is. However, people try to neglect this fact, because they are afraid to pay any price.
77	Not only me but also no one is satisfied with the current situation, though, no one wants to pay any price, nor me and neither others.
78	I am not into politics; I mean I try not to be. Since it is useless and has nothing but distress.
78	Some got very rich during these years, because they were connected to power. Now, if you say something against it, they will send you to <i>Kahrizak</i> !
80	I have no opinion about politics; I cannot earn a minimum income to live, to hell with politics!
80	Politics and protests, for example the incidents of 2009, belong to some useless people who have no real problem.
81	I am not into politics at all and have no opinion.
81	What is the use of a politics? Politics is nasty, some pay the price and nothing changes at the end.
84	I am not into politics, because to enter this world, you have to pay the price and I am not the man to pay any price.
84	I do not think about the supreme leader. I mean, it has nothing to do with me.
86	I am not into politics. I believe you should not follow politics, because it is cruel.
86	Political objection such as protests and such, are ridiculous. They only eradicate the security we have.
87	I do not comment on political issues, I do not even dare to tell my spouse my political opinions.
87	I have nothing to do with supreme leadership; it has nothing to do with the way I live. As long as we have security, I do not care about other stuff.
88	I am not into politics; however, I am not unaware of political issues.
88	Political objection only leads to damage and any wise man will not do that.

Table: C-4

Fourth Category: The positions of "others".

Num	Phrase
10	If the state let people to live as they desire and have their own life style, everyone would be satisfied. The current supreme leader is a dictator and he forces people to accept his idea about everything.
10	I am not into politics, but I believe we should have freedom of speech, freedom in clothing and freedom in film industry and media.
16	We have to have a proper vision to politics. The current supreme leader has caused major problems in this country.
16	Anything this regime is, it must be reformed. Because as soon as they go away, worse than it would come and rule.
19	It would be great if we had freedom of speech alongside supreme leadership. We need to reform; another revolution has many damages and casualties.

19	I am really into politics, everything we have, depends on politics.
26	I would like this regime and it's supreme leader to collapse, but who can help it? I am not ready to pay any price for this cause.
26	I care about politics and I have a problem with the theocratic state, people should have freedom. Their religion is not other's business.
44	This theocratic regime and the supreme leader interfere in every aspect of people's life. It is not right. It was not like this in the Islamic Republic; we have to revive the Ideals of Islamic Revolution.
44	At the end of the day, this society needs a reform. If this regime collapses, foreigners would take its place and they are worse. So, the current regime should be reformed.
51	This supreme leader is not ideal, because he only pretends to be an Islamic person. If he were truly Islamist, that would be wonderful.
51	Everything in this country needs a serious reform, politics and culture and economy and the current government cannot do anything because they do not know anything about true Islam.
57	I, personally, believe the current supreme leader is the main factor that has caused insoluble problems in the country. He has to go away and then people can decide freely how they want to live.
57	The problem of this country is dictatorship.
64	I am totally disagreeing with supreme leadership and the Islamic state, I think these are forms of dictatorship and have to be gone.
64	The circumstance matters, if the circumstance is in a way that a protest does not lead to violence, you should protest then.
85	The current regime is forcing people to do what the supreme leader demands. The state needs to deal well with people and not neglects their demands and needs.
85	Everyone should be able to do as s/he decides; for instance, about veiling. We do not have fundamental problems and the ones we face now, are going to be solved eventually.

TABLE OF INTERVIEWEES

Code	Sex	Age	Education	Household Income per month Million IIR	Married / Children	Occupation	Car Ownership	Religious Affiliation	Satellite User	Internet User	Housing
01	M	23	MA Student	3.5	N	Student	N	0	N	Y	Owner
02	M	25	BA	4	Y/0	Soldier	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
03	M	24	BA	7	N	Self-employed	N	3	Y	Y	Owner
04	M	28	Diploma	4	Y/1	Mechanic	Y	3	Y	Y	Tenant
05	F	19	BA Student	3.5	N	Student	N	2	Y	Y	Owner
06	M	30	BA	7.5	Y/0	Self-employed	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
07	F	29	Diploma	4	Y/0	Secretary	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner
08	F	24	BA	3.5	N	Unemployed	N	2	Y	Y	Tenant
09	F	52	Diploma	2.5	Y/3	Housekeeper	Y	2	Y	N	Owner
10	M	29	MA	4.5	N	Vendor	N	3	Y	Y	Owner
11	F	23	MA Student	4.5	N	Student	N	1	N	Y	Owner
12	M	31	BA	4.5	Y/1	Employee	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
13	M	33	Diploma	2	Y/1	Government employee	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
14	F	55	MA	5	Y/2	Teacher	Y	3.5	Y	Y	Owner
15	F	53	BA	7	Y/3	Housekeeper	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner
16	F	42	Diploma	2.5	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
17	M	60	BA	3	Y/4	Flight engineer	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
18	M	38	Diploma	3	N	Accountant	N	2	Y	Y	Owner
19	F	25	BA	4	N	Unemployed	N	3	N	Y	Owner
20	M	23	BA	3.5	N	Driver	N	2.5	N	Y	Owner
21	F	61	MA	3	Y/2	Artist	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner
22	F	44	MA	3	Y/2	Art teacher	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
23	M	67	MA	3	Y/4	Film maker	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner

24	M	62	MA	3.5	Y/3	Self-employed	Y	4	Y	Y	Owner
25	M	27	BA	2.5	Y/0	Government employee	Y	1	Y	N	Tenant
26	F	35	PhD	3.5	Y/0	University tutor	Y	1	N	Y	Owner
27	M	25	BA	4	N	Structural engineer	N	3	Y	Y	Owner
28	F	33	MA	5	Y/1	Housekeeper	Y	1.5	Y	Y	Owner
29	M	47	MA	3	Y/0	Manager	N	2	N	Y	Owner
30	F	37	BA	5.5	Y/1	Housekeeper	Y	2	N	Y	Owner
31	F	27	BA	2.5	N	Government employee	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
32	F	26	MA Student	2.5	Y/0	Student	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
33	M	48	MA	3.5	Y/2	Government employee	Y	3	N	Y	Tenant
34	F	35	MA	3	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
35	M	28	BA	3	Y/0	Self-employed	Y	3	Y	Y	Tenant
36	F	25	BA	2.5	N	Unemployed	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
37	M	27	MA	2.5	N	Employee	Y	3	N	Y	Tenant
38	F	35	MA	2.5	Y/1	Housekeeper	Y	3	N	Y	Tenant
39	F	49	MA	3.5	Y/3	Housekeeper	Y	4	N	Y	Owner
40	F	33	BA	8	Y/1	Housekeeper	Y	2.5	Y	Y	Tenant
41	F	28	PhD Student	7	N	Student	Y	5	Y	Y	Owner
42	M	36	MA Student	2.5	Y/0	Student	Y	4	N	Y	Tenant
43	M	36	BA	2	N	Seller	Y	3	N	Y	Owner
44	F	34	BA	3	Y/1	Housekeeper	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner
45	F	57	BA	6	Y/3	Housekeeper	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
46	M	24	Diploma	2.5	N	Mobile repairman	N	0	Y	Y	Owner
47	M	28	BA	3	N	Accountant	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner

48	F	45	Diploma	7	Y/2	Self-employed	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
49	M	37	BA	4.5	Y/1	Government employee	Y	4	Y	Y	Owner
50	F	33	MA Student	3.5	Y/0	Student	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
51	M	26	BA	2.5	N	Employee	N	2	Y	Y	Owner
52	M	26	BA	2.5	N	Employee	N	1	Y	Y	Owner
53	F	25	BA	2.5	N	Unemployed	N	0	Y	Y	Owner
54	F	38	Diploma	4.5	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	0	Y	Y	Tenant
55	M	49	Diploma	6	Y/2	Self-employed	Y	2	N	Y	Owner
56	M	51	MA	5	Y/1	Government employee	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
57	F	34	BA	3.5	Y/0	Translator	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
58	M	31	BA	5	N	Mechanic engineer	Y	2	N	Y	Tenant
59	F	26	BA	5.5	N	Model	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
60	M	24	BA Student	3.5	N	Student	N	1	Y	Y	Tenant
61	F	25	BA	3	Y/0	Writer	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
62	F	39	Diploma	2.5	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	3	N	Y	Owner
63	M	42	MA	5	Y/2	Trader	Y	2	N	Y	Owner
64	M	58	MA	6	Y/2	Self-employed	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
65	M	61	BA	5.5	Y/3	Government employee	Y	1	Y	N	Owner
66	F	24	BA	4.5	N	Unemployed	N	0	Y	Y	Owner
67	M	35	BA	4.5	N	Self-employed	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
68	F	67	Diploma	4	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	3	Y	N	Tenant
69	F	44	PhD	8	Y/1	Doctor	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner
70	M	23	BA Student	3	N	Student	N	3.5	Y	Y	Owner
71	F	51	BA	3.5	Y/2	Housekeeper	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner

72	M	26	BA	2.5	N	Unemploye d	N	2	Y	Y	Tenant
73	F	34	MA Student	4	Y/0	Student	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
74	F	39	MA	4.5	Y/0	Seller	Y	1	N	Y	Owner
75	M	27	BA	3	N	Self- employed	Y	2	N	Y	Owner
76	F	25	BA	2	Y/0	Housekeep er	Y	0	Y	Y	Tenant
77	F	40	MA	2	Y/2	Housekeep er	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
78	F	19	BA Student	4.5	N	Student	N	0	N	Y	Owner
79	M	35	BA	2	Y/0	Governme nt employee	Y	2	Y	Y	Tenant
80	F	26	BA	1.5	Y/0	Editor	N	1	Y	Y	Owner
81	M	48	MA	3.5	Y/2	Housekeep er	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
82	F	53	MA	2.5	Y/3	Housekeep er	Y	2	Y	Y	Tenant
83	M	27	BA	2	N	Journalist	Y	1	Y	Y	Tenant
84	F	30	MA Student	4	N	Student	Y	0	N	Y	Tenant
85	F	41	BA	4	Y/1	Housekeep er	Y	2	Y	Y	Owner
86	M	56	Diploma	5.5	Y/2	Self- employed	Y	3	Y	Y	Owner
87	M	28	BA	1.5	Y/0	IT manager	Y	0	Y	Y	Owner
88	F	26	BA	3	Y/0	Employee	N	0	Y	Y	Owner
89	F	33	MA	2.5	Y/1	Housekeep er	N	0	Y	Y	Owner
90	F	39	MA	3	Y/2	Housekeep er	Y	1	Y	Y	Owner

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